

**"THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTS 'MYTH' AND
'HISTORY' FROM HEGEL TO BULTMANN".**

**Submitted to the University of Glasgow for the
Degree of Ph.D. in the Faculty of Divinity
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PREFACE.

"The Development of the concepts 'myth' and 'history' from Hegel to Bultmann" is an explanatory study designed to trace and assimilate some of the thought patterns in the 19th century which have a bearing upon the "entmythologisierung" issue raised in the theology of Rudolf Bultmann. These 19th century ideas are associated with two schools of theology in that century, Hegelianism and Ritschlianism. The former theological position encouraged "the movement away from history", and the latter, along with the search for the historical Jesus in the "Lives of Jesus", initiated a "Return to History". The movement away from history is described in the first section of the thesis. Hegel's distinction between Vorstellung and Begriff, and Strauss' efforts to erect a theology on the basis of his understanding of Hegel's image-idea approach to history, culminate in the negative theories advocated by Bruno Bauer in the 19th century and the Christ-Myth theorists in the early decades of the Twentieth century.

"The Return to History", or the "Quest of the Historical Jesus", arose in the numerous "Lives of

Jesus" toward the middle of the 19th century. This quest of the historical, factual Jesus, and the supremacy accorded the Revelation in Jesus, received theological formulation in the Ritschlian theology. The guiding principles of this search for the "real" Jesus behind the metaphysical speculations and mythical forms, created an impasse in 19th century theology. On the one hand, the Hegelians mythicised Jesus and historicised the Christ, and, on the other, the Ritschlians historicised Jesus and mythicised Christ. That is to say, the Hegelians, while concentrating on the universal significance of the "Absolute Religion", lost touch with the particulars in the New Testament picture. The Ritschlians, while concentrating on the particularities, neglected to relate the "remembered Jesus" with the "present Christ".

Some Twentieth century theologians, William Temple, Rudolf Bultmann and Paul Tillich, have endeavoured to relate the two concepts 'myth' and 'history'. William Temple's Christology remains true to the two emphases, Jesus and the Christ, but this theology merely states the problem. Rudolf Bultmann's theology gives a fresh interpretation of myth and history in the New Testament, but his Christology is basically

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Ritschlian. His ethico-religious emphasis, or his mythological approach to reality, offers a questionable resolvment of the impasse. The Theology of Paul Tillich, while supplementing Bultmann's understanding of the place of myth and symbol in theology, errs on the side of Hegelianism. His form-content approach to Christianity, while delineating the issues which gave rise to the impasse in 19th century theology, sacrifices, to use his terminology, "the Jesus character of the Christ".

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INTRODUCTION.

This essay proposes to grasp the historical origin of certain biblical, philosophical and theological trends of thought which are causing dismay and protest in mid-twentieth century. There have been many challenging books addressed to the problems which one encounters in contemporary theological writings, but these attempts at criticising and erecting new syntheses have failed to present the sweep of theological activity in the 19th century. After probing in this difficult setting, we discovered that, if the current descriptions of the Christological issues are to be meaningfully assessed, some attention should be given to certain germinal ideas in the 19th century. The 19th century witnesses two trends in Christological thought: one in the beginning of the century which took as its basic framework the idealistic philosophy enunciated by Hegel, and the other pattern toward the end of the century found its theological expression in the theology of Albrecht Ritschl. The first trend was concerned with the ideal conception of the Divine Humanity, or the Christ of Divine Humanity who is independent of history or historical validation. This pattern was set forth in the early writings of Freidrick

Strauss. If Strauss' speculations are pushed to their logical conclusions, as they were done in the writings of Bruno Bauer and the Christ-Myth-theorists in the 19th and early 20th century, they lead to a negation of the historical Jesus and some rather absurd attempts to explain the origin and development of the Christian movement. Ironically, the first pattern in the 19th century contributed to a historical and critical approach to the New Testament. Freed by the Idea, i.e., the belief that the Notion, Begriff or Divine Humanity, was immune from criticism, these theologians were equipped to deal radically with biblical problems and to set the stage for many expert findings in New Testament theology. The first trend, despite its contributions to a study of history, can be called "the movement away from history".

The second discernible trend in the century, initiated by Strauss' second life of Jesus (His life for the German People) in 1864, received theological expression in the systematic theology of Abrecht Ritschl and the Post-Ritschlians toward the close of the century. The advocates of the so-called Liberal picture of Jesus, sought to

discover in the human picture of Jesus obtainable in the Synoptic narratives, the basis for a historical Christology. "The Quest of the Historical Jesus", to use the title of Albert Schweitzer's classic work, and the "Back to the Historical Jesus", constituted the driving force in this school of theology. The "Remembered Jesus" and the Christ of the past, understood apart from the mystical and ecclesiastical and idealistic speculations, encounters man, according to this school of thought, in human moral excellence and in the God-revealing quality of Jesus. The particular historic facts concerning Jesus and the "plain man's attitude to plain facts"¹ were supreme in the Ritschlian school and in the novelistic lives of Jesus which appeared through the century.

We believe this Christological dialectic in the 19th century is basic to an understanding of the "entmythologisierung" controversy initiated by Rudolf Bultmann in his 1941 essay, "New Testament and Mythology". Moreover, this apparent irreconcilable antithesis in 19th century Christological thought must be grasped before the reconstructions in the 20th century are intelligible. It is our tentative hypothesis that two theologians in

1. Quick, O.C., "Liberalism, Modernism and Tradition" -
p.6.

the 20th century, Bultmann and Tillich, separate on their interpretation of the Christ precisely along the lines set by the Hegelian scheme and the Ritschlian ethico-religious emphasis. Paul Tillich's theology moves a step beyond the Ritschlian theology, while retaining the essential gains of that theological pattern.

There are surveys which attempt to trace trends which are written from some preconceived pattern or which, through their forcing of ideas into some procrustean bed of rationalism, seek to spell out the pattern which is considered to be primary and unique in the given period surveyed. Schweitzer and Hegel, among others, make this error. In his "Quest of the Historical Jesus", Schweitzer illustrates his approach to his data. Speaking of the three great alternatives which the study of the life of Jesus had to meet in the 19th century, Schweitzer writes: "The first was laid down by Strauss: either purely historical or purely supernatural. The second had been worked out by the Tübingen school and Holtzmann: either synoptic or Johannine. Now came the third (Johannes Weiss and himself): either eschatological or non-eschatology. Progress always consists in taking one or other of the two alternatives, in

abandoning the attempt to combine them. The pioneers of progress have, therefore, always to reckon with the law of mental inertia which manifests itself in the majority - who always go on believing that it is possible to combine that which can no longer be combined, and, in fact, claim it as a special merit that they, in contrast with the 'one-sided' writers, can do justice to the other side of the question. One must just let them be, till their time is over, and resign oneself not to see the end of it, since it is found by experience that the complete victory of one of two historical alternatives is a matter of two full theological generations."².

Though one would not question the progress made on the lines which Schweitzer erects, it has been the combining efforts in the field of biblical criticism and in the portraits of Jesus which have revolutionised 20th century biblical exegesis. Perhaps if Schweitzer's thorough-going eschatology had been tempered by a due regard for those passages in the New Testament which could not be compressed into his interpretation, he would have made a more profound contribution to biblical theology. But, we are not concerned with this aspect of Schweitzer's

2. Schweitzer, Albert, "The Quest of the Historical Jesus" - p.237 - 238.

thinking. We are interested in impugning this either-or approach to theological problems. Before we can criticise the dichotomous approach to theological problems, these issues must be stated and the absolutism of these separate treatments shown to be relative. It is, to return to the purpose of our essay, in the development of the concepts 'myth' and 'history' from Hegel to Bultmann, the tracing of the either-or approach in the 19th century and early 20th century and to follow this with some description of the dialectical treatment of these issues, particularly in the theology of Paul Tillich. We shall be concerned with one principal area of biblical interpretation: the bearing of myth on biblical exegesis and the consequent interpretation of history. For our starting point, the Philosophy of Hegel, primarily because his interpretation of historical facts gave birth to the ideas of Strauss and Bauer and, indirectly, to the Christ-myth theories in the late 19th and early 20th century, will receive some interpretation. It is imperative that Hegel's philosophy be sketched, particularly that part which bears upon the central theme of our essay. We shall be concerned with Hegel's thought to the extent of

defining and describing his approach to history. The distinction which Hegel makes between "Vorstellung" and "Begriff" will prepare us to understand Strauss' Christological reconstruction. Bruno Bauer, following Strauss' Hegelian speculations, carried this distinction on to its logical conclusion, thus being the first 19th century theologian to deny the historicity of Jesus. The writings of Strauss and Bauer, or the seeds which they sowed, combined with other factions in the 19th century, e.g., comparative religions and the evolutionary hypothesis applied to religious ideas, gave birth to the Christ-myth theories. These theorists, J.M. Robertson, W.B. Smith, Arthur Drews, Jensen, Kautsky and Kalthoff, to mention the well-known ones, were determined to explain the birth of Christianity apart from Jesus of Nazareth or the "Gospel Jesus" (Robertson).

When we have surveyed what we have termed "the movement away from History" in Hegel, Strauss, Bauer and the Christ-myth theorists, we return to the mid-nineteenth century to pick up the threads of the other trend which culminated in the theology of Albrecht Ritschl. The Ideal Christ of the Hegelians gives way to the historical Jesus and the search for the

human portrait in the synoptic writings. Despairing of the traditional interpretation of the supernatural and the metaphysical embellishments of the idealists, this school of ethico-religious thinkers were concerned to bring home the force of the divine in the sphere of the human. The sphere of the divine on earth was located for the bulk of these theologians in the moral. The value of religion was chiefly its bearing upon the moral life. The qualities in Jesus which inspire goodness, morality and brotherhood are woven into a Christology.

Considerable attention has been given to the "Lives of Jesus" written during this period. Albert Schweitzer and Heinrich Weinel ("Jesus in the Nineteenth Century and After") devote much space to such attempts to reconstruct the life of Jesus. We propose to introduce our inquiry by merely glancing at these efforts and to proceed to reveal the logical development of this trend in the Ritschlian school. The theology of Ritschl, Herrmann, Troeltsch and Pfliederer, will receive some clarification. We are particularly interested in the interpretation of history.

Our survey must move into the twentieth century to trace some of the both-and approaches to the theological and Christological problems. William Temple's theology, especially his Christology, has been chosen to mirror the efforts in this century to do justice to both 19th century Christological trends. The theology of Rudolf Bultmann and Paul Tillich will further describe the relationship between myth and history. We will develop Bultmann's demythologizing of the New Testament from three angles. First, Bultmann's understanding of myth is compared and contrasted with David F. Strauss'. Second, Bultmann's dual description of myth is described and the criteria for establishing myth in the New Testament. Third, the theology of Paul Tillich, especially his understanding of myth and history, criticises and supplements Bultmann's ideas.

CHAPTER I.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF G. W. F. HEGEL.

PREFACE.

We are concerned with Hegel's interpretation of history and the way in which his two concepts 'Vorstellung' and 'Idee' give rise to Strauss' mythical interpretation of Christianity and, indirectly, to the Christ-Myth theories of the early decades of the twentieth century. I am particularly interested in Hegel's distinction between image and idea and the theological understandings of this point of view in Strauss.

PART ONE

THE MOVEMENT AWAY FROM HISTORY.

we are for Hegel's interpretation of Christianity and the relationship which exists between Christianity and philosophy in his philosophical system. We proceed in the following manner: First, we describe Hegel's philosophy of history and his understanding of the dialectical process in history, viz. the emergence of Spirit in Nature, Spirit advancing to the consciousness of its freedom and the elevation of Spirit to its pure Universal Idea. Secondly, Hegel's identification of the course of human history with the course of the Divine Self-Revelation of God involves him in a discussion of the Trinity. Thirdly, there are three questions in relation to

CHAPTER I.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF G.W. HEGEL.PREFACE.

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CHAPTER I.

Nature Religion, the emergence of Religious Freedom and the final Revelation of the Absolute Religion.

The central point of our discussion is reached when Hegel considers the ways in which religious consciousness appropriates the Idea.

Historical progress of the consciousness of freedom on the part of the subjective spirit, and the consequent realization of that freedom on the level of objectivity, personified in the State. World history begins when the subjective consciousness, impelled by the necessity of its nature, separates itself from the state of dreaming immediacy or potential self-consciousness, and seeks to actualize its freedom in the negativities of history. The aim of history and the essential subject matter of history, is the achievement of objective freedom by peoples, totalities that are states.

Unlike the typical philologist of history which emphasize the objective side of history, i.e., what has happened, chronicling and collecting and recording factual details concerning events which took place one after another in time and space without any vital or essential connection, Hegel is cognizant of this side of historical research; his concern is to emphasize the subjective side of history, the underlying reality of the events. In his history, individual events conform to a pattern which only pure reason can work out independent of the manifold and

CHAPTER I.THE PHILOSOPHY OF G.W. HEGEL.

1. Hegel's Philosophy of History: A General Description.

Hegel's Philosophy of History is concerned to show that the history of the world is none other than the dialectical progress of the consciousness of freedom on the part of the subjective spirit, and the consequent realisation of that freedom on the level of objectivity personified in the State. World history begins when the subjective consciousness, impelled by the necessity of its nature, separates itself from the state of dreaming innocency or potential self-consciousness, and seeks to actualise its freedom in the negativities of History. The aim of history and the essential subject matter of History, is the achievement of objective freedom by peoples, totalities that are states.

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relative data of history. He is concerned to portray the coherence and intelligibility behind the historical process as a whole - to show that history manifests a hidden meaning which cannot be observed or detected by the ordinary tools of historical research. His aim is to penetrate behind the surface of historical phenomena, with its incompleteness and arbitrariness and accidental movements, to the reality which he has no doubt underlies them. The pragmatic, critical and reflective histories of his day were concerned with some aspect of history, deducing details from one period, recording and interpreting these elements without realising the reality which was moving through them. Hegel, on the other hand, was not content with the mere collection and elaboration of the external and visible elements, he was seeking to reveal the underlying plot, the inherent necessity and rationality of history - to open for inspection the essential clue of history, which was understood to be the development of freedom.

His methodological approach can be illustrated by reference to his views on historical Christianity in his Philosophy of Religion lectures. It will be noted particularly in this reference, his appreciation of the dual nature of history, i.e., what has happened and the interpretation of the event. Or,

Systematic Theology, delivered at Union
Theological Seminary, Spring Semester, 1841,
Peter John's Transcription, p. 56.

2. Philosophy of Religion, Vol. 1, p. 146.

as Paul Tillich says, "History is both fact and interpretation of fact, or reception of the event." ¹ While he admits Christianity's concern with the Divine History of Jesus Christ, the events which present themselves in a sensuous manner are of no concern to the notion. Unlike Tillich, who considers the fact to be an integral part of the reception, Hegel would contend that the fact concerns the ordinary pictorial mind but not the mind which thinks rationally and coherently. But in any case, what he says will serve to bring out his specific approach to History. Acknowledging the events, he says they have another side which is often neglected. "It has the Divine for its content, divine action, divine timeless events, a mode of working that is absolutely divine. And this is the inward, the true, the substantial element of this history, and it is just this that is the object of reason. In every narrative, in fact, there is this double element...every narrative... contains this external series of occurrences and actions, but these are occurrences, it must be remembered, in the life of a man, a spirit." ²

It is not the narrative in its empirical, concrete, manifold sense which concerns Hegel, but the inner

1. Paul Tillich, Lectures in Advanced Problems in Systematic Theology, delivered at Union Theological Seminary, Spring Semester, 1952, Peter John's transcription, p.50.
2. Philosophy of Religion, Vol.1. p.146.

element in the outward sensuous historical event. It is the universal laws, forces and patterns of history which constitute the content of his philosophical analysis of History. Because of his consciousness of the development of the internal principle of the free spirit, his Philosophy of History purposes to give a thoughtful, comprehensive construction of historical events. He undertakes to pass in review the drama as a whole, to discover its final cause, to demonstrate its motive, and to indicate its total significance. Philosophical history, concerned as it is with man's internal potentiality and the realisation of this essential nature in the negativities of History, is, so Hegel would claim, the only adequate interpretation which can do justice to Spirit; which is in itself the constitution of the heart of History's investigation.

Utilising Reason, which is the inherent principle of the Spirit and the Universe, the tool which can make explicit what is implicit and actual what is potential in Spirit, Hegel seeks to give the basis for his interpretation of History. Only through Reason which governs the processes of Spirit and Nature, which in reality is the source of the Universal and the region in which God-is,³ can the sensuous impulses, vain imagination, restless passions and agonising events of History take on

3. Philosophy of Religion, Vol.1, p.202.

new meaning and mirror the relevance and potentiality of Spirit. Reason, "the substance of the Universe" and "the infinite complexity of things,"⁴ can comprehend the Spirit in its essence, undeveloped stage, and at the same time understand the stuff of History which presents the Spirit with the necessary field of actualisation. It is, further-more, and only with the beginning of Rationality, that History can be said to be History. Illustrating his point, Hegel caustically criticises the fanciful theories which posit the beginning of History in man's paradisaical stage of existence. He says, "The only consistent and worthy method which philosophical investigation can adopt is to take up History where rationality begins to manifest itself in the actual conduct of world affairs, (not where it is merely an undeveloped potentiality), where a condition of things is present in which it realises itself in conscious will and action."⁵ "Consciousness alone is clearness; and is that alone for which God or any other existence can be revealed."⁶ History is inaugurated by inference of reason, that is to say, History begins when the conscious Spirit extricates and elevates itself above the natural self-contradictions to its true essence. And

4. Philosophy of History, p.16.

5. Ibid, p.62.

6. Ibid, p.64.

any other beginning of History, is to Hegel, "ante-Historical", and beyond the pale of History.

After formulating his method of historical examination, Hegel attempts to examine Spirit, or "the phenomenon of Historical investigation" in more detail. Spirit is the inner region of man's subjective consciousness, the house of volition, resolutions, actions, interests and, where reason is present, as the absolute substantial nature of man's being. The nature of..."Spirit is Self-contained Existence." "Now this is Freedom."⁷. This self-contained existence of Spirit is none other than self-consciousness - consciousness of one's own Being. The Freedom of Spirit, which..... "resulted from the revelation of the Divine Being as its original basis"⁸. or...."what was intruded by Divine Wisdom,"⁹ must advance to the comprehension of this freedom. Hegel says..."It is the very nature of Spirit, just because it is living to be at first only potential, to be in its notion or conception, then to come forward in existence, to unfold, produce itself, become mature."¹⁰. The maturity of this unconscious freedom of Spirit "can be actually accomplished in the domain of existent, active Spirit, as well as in that of mere Nature."¹¹. The question of the means by which this undeveloped hidden and unrealised

7. Ibid., p.18.

8. Ibid., p.16.

9. Ibid., p.17.

10. Philosophy of Religion, Vol.1. p.75.

11. Philosophy of History, p.16.

freedom develops itself to a world, conducts us to the phenomena of History.

Although, as we have seen, the freedom of the Spirit is an implicit Idea, the means it uses to actualise its potentiality, are external and phenomenal; presenting themselves in History to our sensuous vision. The means for realising man's essential freedom, his complete self-consciousness in union with the objective consciousness of the State, appears in the form of natural existence, natural will, physical craving, instincts, passions and subjective concepts. "This vast congeries of volition, interests, and activities, constitute the instrument and means of the world Spirit for attaining its object; bringing it to consciousness, and realising it."¹² It is through the activity of History, described by Hegel as..... "the slaughter-bench at which the happiness of peoples, the wisdom of States, and the virtue of individuals have been victimised"¹³: that the Universal latent principle of Freedom and absolute self-consciousness can be translated into the stage of objectivity. Reason utilises the misery and suffering, the particular will of the nations, as means for accomplishing her role in the world. The negative field of History,

12. Ibid., p.26.

13. Ibid., p.22.

constituting an essential, necessary and incidental stage in the Spirit's development, is directed to rendering the unconscious impulse of freedom a conscious one. The interest and passion of men, and nations, the driving force of eros, inevitably present in Spirit, but obscured and hidden in nature, serve as instruments and necessary means for the actualisation of the idea of Freedom. (Note: - this

In this stage of the Spirit's development, it is knowledge, or the actuality of thought, which brings out man's essential contradiction between what he is and what he should become. "By the very act of thoughtful cognition and volition, I will the Universal object - the substantiality of absolute Reason."¹⁴. That is to say, Hegel contends that only on the basis of a Philosophical comprehension of History, can the Idea of Freedom be seen advancing to an Infinite antithesis; between the Idea in its free, Universal form - in which it exists for itself - and the contrasted form of abstract introversion, reflection on itself, which is formal existence-for-self, personality, formal freedom, such as belongs to Spirit only. The Universal Idea exists as the substantive totality of things, on the one side, and as the abstract essence of free volition on

14. Ibid., p.42.

the other side. This reflection of the mind on itself is Individual self-consciousness - the polar opposite of the Idea in its general form, and therefore existing in absolute limitation. This polar opposite is consequently limitive, particularisation, for the Universal absolute Being; it is the side of its definite existence; the sphere of its formal reality, the sphere of the reverence paid to God.¹⁵ (Note:- this paragraph will be clearer when Hegel's ideas on the Trinity are discussed).

It is clear so far in our discussion, that the realising activity, vis-a-vis the sphere of History, with its limitations and restrictions, is the middle term of the syllogism, one of whose extremes is the Universal essence, the Idea, which reposes in the penetralia of Spirit; and the other, the complex of external things - objective matter. Our next inquiry should be - "What then constitutes the development from the middle position; the actualisation of Individual self-consciousness to Universal, or to the World-Historical Individual Consciousness?" We are informed that the process of subjective self-consciousness is not complete within itself.... "The spirit of man has its source of life neither in its abstract self-hood (in consciousness and

15. Ibid., p.42.

conscience) nor in its mere natural environment and organic endowment (in sense-affections, and social law and usage), but in the unity of both - a unity which transcends either. Both individual and society live and grow, because they are continuous and one; because they presuppose an ideal unity of a living Idea at the root of their being, as their inner and essential guiding-principle, at once constitutive and regulative of their action."¹⁶ "Both individual and society live together....because they presuppose an ideal unity or living Idea at the root of their being." These words point to the synthesising process; the process whereby the subjective freedom is achieved on a lasting basis. It is the Universal objective consciousness mediated through the State, in its laws, and its universal and rational arrangements which supplies the machinery for the full actualisation of the Ideal. "The State is the Divine Idea as it exists on Earth"...We have in it, therefore, the object of History in a more definite shape than before; that in which Freedom obtains objectivity, and lives in the enjoyment of this objectivity. For law is the objectivity of Spirit; volition in its true form and only that will which obeys law, is free; for it

17. Philosophy of History, p. 41.

18. Ibid., p. 42.

19. Ibid., p. 42.

obeys itself - it is independent, and so free."¹⁷. Commenting further on the function of the State, Hegel says: "The State is the Idea of Spirit in the external manifestation of human will and its Freedom. It is to the State, therefore, that change in the aspect of History indissolubly attaches itself; and the successive phases of the Idea manifest themselves in it as distinct political principles."¹⁸. The State, the objective reality which unifies the subjective and objective self-consciousness, the realm when Spirit comes home to itself, form the basis and centre of the other concrete elements of the life of a people - of art, of law, of morals, or religion, of Science. "Among the forms of this consciousness, Religion occupies the highest position. In it, Spirit rising above the limitation of temporal and secular existence - becomes conscious of the Absolute Spirit, and in this consciousness of self-existent Being, renounces its Individual intent; it lays this aside in devotion, a state of man in which it refuses to occupy itself any longer with the limited and particular."¹⁹. The function of Religion will be considered in another context, but meanwhile - before considering the epochs which History naturally divides itself into - the Hegelian dialectical transitions must be

17. Philosophy of History, p.41.

18. Ibid., p.42.

19. Ibid., p.51.

discussed in more detail.

The subject of history is man, (essential or universal, generic man), as he realises and develops his inherent freedom in an objective framework. History has a beginning (when man, by the exercise of reason in the frictions of history comprehends his true necessity and separates himself from his universal essence), a middle period (when man is actually in the process of extricating himself from his natural self - when the spiritual essence of man begins to conquer the natural that attaches to him), and an end (when the human and divine nature become one, when man realises he possesses the essentiality and substantiality that belongs to the idea of the deity, and, further, when this subjective self-consciousness is sanctioned and united with the objective consciousness presented by, and embodied in, the State. Hegel sums up this developmental process in his own words in his "Philosophy of History". He says..."The first step in the process presents that immersion of Spirit in Nature which has already been referred to; the second shows it as advancing to the consciousness of its freedom. But this initial separation from Nature is imperfect and partial,

since it is devised immediately from the mere State of nature, is consequently related to it, and is still encumbered with it as an essentially connected element. The third step is the elevation of the soul from the still limited and special form of freedom to its pure Universal form; that state in which the spiritual essence attains the consciousness and feeling of itself."²⁰. But it must be borne in mind that the unity or conjunction of the particular with the universal is realised only in the State. The individual's every thought and act, and will, receive their being and significance from a reality which is established in him as a permanent spirit. The ideal totality of the parts is realised under the particular form of a Nation (Volk) which in the visible sphere represents (or, rather, is, as a particular) the absolute and infinite. Such a unity is neither the mere sum of isolated individuals, nor a mere majority ruling by numbers, but the fraternal and organic commonwealth which brings all classes and all rights from their particularistic independence into an ideal identity and indifference. In the state, or ideal nation, the moral life embraces and is co-extensive with religion, art and science; practice and theory are one; life in the idea knows none of those differences which, in the

20. Ibid, p.59.

un-ideal world, make art and morality often antithetical, and set religion at variance with science. It may be remarked that, while Hegel's "Philosophy of History" envisaged the ideal Nation as the synthesis, he is at pains to record the process by which History carries out a judgement on nation after nation, until the lower, inadequate formulations of the ideal are reached in the Ideal Nation, the Germanic. To this developmental scheme we must now turn our attention.

Hegel establishes the line of his argument when he says; "In the History of the World, only those peoples can come under our notice which form a State. For it must be understood that the latter is the realisation of freedom, i.e. of the absolute final aim and that exists for its own sake. It must further be understood that all the worth which the human being possesses - all spiritual reality, he possesses through the State."²¹. It is then clearly the State, with its 'idiosyncrasy of Spirit' and peculiar national genius which will determine the grades in which absolute Freedom becomes a possession. Before discussing the State (the German nation) which finally realises perfect Freedom, it will suffice only if the so-called imperfect phases are mentioned.

21. Ibid., p.41.

History begins when the daylight of spiritual consciousness dawns upon man. This dawn of rationality occurred in Asia. The first main division of history will accordingly be the Oriental world, the scent of history's childhood. Hegel describes this stage by reference to the idea of freedom. That is..."unreflected consciousness - substantial, objective, spiritual existence, forms the basis; to which the subjective will first sustains a relation in the form of faith, confidence, and obedience."²² At this point, freedom is recognised as a spiritual attribute, but only in an inadequate form, the form of an abstract universal, which, as such, can be lodged only in one subject or substance. The Oriental world, therefore, admits that one is free. This one, politically, is the Monarch, who is the substance of the State, of which his subjects are the accidents.

The Grecian world constitutes the second division, representing the second age in the life of history, the age of youth or the "period of adolescence". Here, spiritual freedom is not recognised as a concrete universal, and hence as the property of all men, yet it is no longer ascribed to one. The Greek and Roman world declared that .."some are free". In Greece, "individualities are developed".

22. Ibid., p.111.

In the third phase of History, History attains the age of manhood in the Roman world. It is the age of painful labour. Individuality is brought under the yoke, of abstract and "dead" law, receiving, however, as a partial compensation, the formal recognition and definition of its legal status in the possession of specific "personal rights".

Finally, with the Germanic world, and under the inspiration and reconciliation of the Absolute Religion, History reaches the age of full maturity. The antithesis between Church and State, between particular and universal, between subjective and objective self-consciousness vanishes. "The Spiritual becomes re-connected with the Secular, and develops this latter as an independently organic existence.....This is the ultimate result which the process of History is intended to accomplish."²³.

11. The Ideal State, with particular reference to Reformation Christianity.

Consideration of the completion, the ideal fulfilment and actualisation of freedom in the Germanic world, leads directly to an examination of the part exercised by the Revelation of the Absolute Religion. The preparation for the reception of the Revealed Religion will be

23. Ibid., p.116.

considered in another context; but, for the present, the unification of Religion and the State is of primary concern. While the reconciliation of God and man came during the reign of the Caesars, according to Hege^l, full appropriation of this revelation, "must be looked for elsewhere than in the properly Roman world."¹ In the Roman world, the Church and the State were divided; each serving a different cause and advocating a different means for healing the division of mankind. The State, by its very nature, entailed the subjugation of private rights and the thwarting of personality development. The Church, by its very constitution, obligatory allegiance and persecuted existence, could not offer an adequate basis for the actualisation of the Spirit of Freedom on a secular level. The reconciliation... "posited in the Christian religion"²: was appropriated in the individual's heart, but, because of the split between the secular and the sacred and the inevitable subjectivism of the Revealed Religion, the Church was helpless to break the discord between the inner life of the heart and the actual world. It was the Germanic world which first freed the idea of Freedom from the

1. Ibid., p.333.

2. Ibid., p.336.

substratum of the religious unconsciousness and paved the way for the objective realisation of the self-consciousness. Though it must be remembered, that according to the Hegelian dialectic, this consciousness did not realise itself in one period of time. Within the German world, Hegel sees three periods of the development of Freedom. He has designated these three phases; the Kingdom of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The first period begins with the appearance of the German nation in the Roman Empire. This corresponds to the Kingdom of the Father in that the Spirit is present implicitly, but remains self-involved. The second period, covering the Middle Ages with the beginning of the reign of Charlemagne to the time of Charles the Fifth, represents the Kingdom of the Son. This is the manifestation of God merely in a relation to secular existence, shining upon it as an alien object. The second phase develops the two sides of the antithesis (Church and State, subjective and objective self-consciousness) to a logically consequential independence and opposition. The Church for itself as a Theocracy, and the State for itself as a Feudal Monarchy. States were formed without a sense of universality and the

Church made herself the mistress of all the relations of life - of science, art - she was the permanent repository of spiritual treasures. The third period of German history - or the development of freedom in the German civilisation, called by Hegel, the Kingdom of the Spirit, begins in the first half of the sixteenth century and extends to modern times. This phase of history represents the harmonisation of the antithesis. With the union between the Church and State, between Reason and Faith, and between subjective and objective self-consciousness of freedom, political life was now to be consciously regulated by reasoned thought.

It is to be noted that Hegel applies the same threefold development to the history of the world which preceded the emergence of the German civilisation. The first period, or the reign of Charlemagne may be compared with the Persian Empire. It is the substantial unity of the race. The unity had its foundation in the inner man, the heart, and both secular and spiritual abide in their simplicity. This is the period of self-involved freedom, or the kingdom of the Father. The Greek world, with its merely ideal unity, corresponds to the period of German history preceding Charles V. This is a period of

separation - a breaking away from the substantial unity and establishing the antithesis between God and the Son, or between God and the World. The third epoch of German history may be likened with the Roman world. Religion and thought advance to the comprehension of the Idea. "The authority of Rational Aim is acknowledged, and privileges and particularities melt away before the common object of the State. People will the right in and for itself; regard is not had exclusively to particular conventions between nations, but principles enter into the considerations with which diplomacy is occupied."³ Both Church and State advance to the comprehension of the Idea. This epoch has abolished the separations occurring in the realm of reality; now the distinct elements of the German world manifest their essential nature.

Returning to the third phase in German history, the Kingdom of the Spirit, the period which annuls the antithesis between Reason and Faith, between the State and the Church, and between God and His Son, we may inquire concerning the peculiar elements which effected this synthesis.

Hegel occupies himself with the antitheses between Church and State in his "Philosophy of History". In another context we will have cause to examine the resolvment of the antithesis

3. Ibid., p.359.

between Religion and Philosophy. Two factors in the third phase of German history contributed to the abrogation of the antithesis; the Reformation and the German State.

A. The Reformation.

Prior to the German Reformation, the period of the Son, or the phase of history from Charlemagne's reign to Charles the Fifth's reign, the organised Church was no longer spiritual, but only an ecclesiastical power calculated to paralyse in its subjects spirit, will and intelligence. The result was shameless vice and unscrupulousness. The Church of the Middle Ages confused the manifestation of the Deity with definite, objective and specific embodiments. In its pilgrimages to the places frequented by Christ, zest for uncovering the actual grave of their Christ, and the unspiritual emphasis on the "Host", the Catholic Church endeavoured to "objectify" their God. Furthermore, sins were forgiven in a grossly superficial and trivial fashion - to be purchased for money. In this reign of ecclesiastical terror and religious bigotry and blind, unconditional obedience to the Church Dogma, the Monk of Wittenberg, Martin Luther, declared that the specific, definite and sensuous

manifestation of the Deity was not to be found in the elevated Host, or the search for a deity in an earthly sepulchre of stone, or in any other external mode of worship. The Absolute Ideality, God, in his particular existence as Spirit, was to be discovered in the inner recesses of the heart. This simple monk, so Hegel says, recognised that Christ is truly and fully present only to the believing spirit - through this channel God in Christ becomes the bread of the world. This is the simple doctrine of Luther, which may be summed up in the words "faith" and "the witness of the spirit". The Christian consciousness is not the consciousness of a sensuous object as God, nor a mere historical memory, and by the removal of the attribute of sensuous externality, all doctrine are reconstructed and all superstitions are reformed away.⁴ Hegel gives his definition, or understanding of Luther's doctrine of Faith in the following words: "Faith is by no means a bare assurance respecting finite things - an assurance which belongs only to limited mind as, for example, the belief that such and such a person existed and said this or that; or that the Children of Israel passed dry-shod through the Red Sea - or that the trumpets before the walls of Jericho produced as powerful an

4. Philosophy of Religion, vol.1. p.45.

impression as our cannons; for although nothing of all this had been related to us, knowledge of God would not be less complete. In fact, it is not belief in something that is absent, past or gone, but the subjective assurance of the eternal, or Absolute Truth, the Truth of God."⁵ The reform measures instituted by the Lutheran Reformation, Hegel is assured, prepared the way for reconciliation between the secular and sacred which before was impossible. Luther's doctrine of faith and responsibility did not demand that the subjective spirit renounce the world; on the contrary, the spirit was urged to emancipate itself from its own particularity and come to itself in realising the truth of its being. Responsibility instead of asceticism was encouraged by him whose ideas now made possible the union of the State and the Church. Because the message of the Church was now extricated from the sensuous and particular externalities sanctioned by the Catholic Church, the free spirit could proceed to realise its necessary destiny.

B. The German State.

While the Reformed Church exercised its reconciling function, the German State, because of its inherent

5. Philosophy of History, p.432.

genius, its system of government and free heritage was prepared to give the subjective spirit its legitimate objectivity. Hegel poses a question and his answer affords us an insight into the peculiar function performed by the German nation. He asks: "Why was the Reformation limited to certain nations and why did it not permeate the whole Catholic world?" He answers by pointing to the pure inwardness of the German nation; its refined spirit, and its homogenous culture. These factors prepared the German people to be bearers of the Christian principle and their country to be the proper soil for the emancipation of Spirit.⁶ "The Romanic Nations, on the contrary, have maintained in the very depth of their soul - in their spiritual consciousness, the principle of disharmony; they are a product of the fusion of Roman and German blood, and still retain the heterogeneity thus resulting."⁷ These latter nations are not free because they leave their affairs, their subjective freedom and inmost being in the hands of an outward authority - the Church and the State, and the separation of their interests, religious from secular, witnesses to an unrealised separation and dichotomy in their inmost soul. But it is the German nation which,

6. Ibid., p.438.

7. Ibid., p.438.

following the process of mediation between man and God which recognised objective existence as the crux of the reconciliation between the subjective and objective self-consciousness, that proceeds to take this harmonisation into its own life and starts out to build up its secular relations. Because truth had been embodied in the secular and finite was shown to be but a moment of God's existence, and not separate from Him, it follows...."that morality and justice in the State are also Divine and commanded by God."⁸ Following the Reformer's sanction of society, illustrated by Luther's lifting of marriage from the less than holy place it had been placed in by an emphasis on chastity, and the Christian's responsibility for the conduct of industry, crafts and trades, it is now perceived that the ethical and the just, in the sphere of man's social and political relations is worthy to be termed divine. With the acknowledgement that the rational element in volition and action constitutes the obedience to the laws of the State instead of the blind obedience demanded by the Catholic Church, man need no longer fear contradiction or persecution

8. Ibid., p.440.

9. Ibid., p.440.

10. Ibid., p.440.

on the part of the religious conscience. With the recognition that the secular is capable of being the dwelling place of the true, the State and the Church could now attain immediate unification. Secular life, became the positive and definite embodiment of the spiritual kingdom - the kingdom of will freely manifesting itself in outward existence. Objective freedom, fully entered upon in the State constitutes the laws of real freedom and the instruments whereby the contingent will, and unruly passions, may be subjugated. This subjugation does not annul subjective freedom; on the contrary, objectivity maintains this freedom. "If the objective is in itself rational, human insight, and conviction must correspond with the reason which it embodies, and we have the other essential element - subjective freedom also realised."⁹

Hegel's last words in his "Philosophy of History" prepare the way for a fuller analysis of his views on the Trinity. He says: "The history of the world, with all the changing scenes which its annals present, is this process of development and the realisation of Spirit - this is the true Theodicea, the justification of God in History."¹⁰ In another context he amplifies this remark by saying: "The State is the expression of the

9. Ibid., p.476.

10. Ibid., p.477.

progression of God in the world. Each State, each civilisation with its particular arts, religion, and science, each government, embodies a phase of the Universal Idea or World Spirit. Thus the history of the world becomes the actual realisation of an infinite, eternal and objective mind."¹¹.

3. Hegel's Doctrine of the Trinity.

Because Hegel identifies the course of human history with the course of the Divine Self-Revelation of God, it is necessary to enquire further into his views on the Trinity, said by him to be "the axis on which the history of the world turns."¹ God's dialectical transitions, so we are informed, are as necessary to His actualisation of self-consciousness as the dialectical phases which the human spirit and the universe passthrough to realise complete self-consciousness. In order to be God, He must separate Himself from His implicit consciousness, from the stage designated by Hegel as "Father", and become an object to Himself, or realise Himself as Spirit. Only as He returns to Himself is He

11. Ibid., p.470.

1. Philosophy of History, p.331.

God and without the world (God's object) God is not God. To understand this scheme, we must bear in mind two errors which Hegel was attempting to refute. (1) Popular religious thinking had made God unknowable, incomprehensible, and other than finite. Man was on one side and the finite was opposed by an infinite, and it was impossible for the finite to know "what God is", His essence of basic movements. "That God is" was the only assertion the popular religious mind would make. Hegel was satisfied that contradictory, abstract logic created an impossible antithesis between Being and Thought. On the basis of his understanding of the Notion (God in His moments), Hegel believed that he could destroy this dualism.

(2) Theological thought in his day confined its studies to the historical, the manifestation of God's "Other" without attempting to comprehend the "absolute ideality" of God, or God in his finished process. Consequently, Trinitarian thinking was abstract, confusing and contradictory. To refute both errors, Hegel endeavours to show that the Trinity was not unthinkable, but, in reality, formed the basis for understanding God in relationship to Himself and to the world.

Hegel's triune God has three moments, characteristics or so-called determinations. In the first phase, God exists as Universal, unrealised essence in and for itself. At this moment God is in his eternity before the creation of the world, and outside of the world. Essentially God abides within Himself. "The Universal contains its entire idea, but it only contains it in the idea of potentiality."² But the Universal, by its very inner nature, and its logical necessity must differentiate itself within itself, and thus preserve within itself the element of difference, but yet to do this in such a way as not to disturb the Universality which is also there. God's essence, or the absolute Idea, implies the existence of an Other, and Object which it consciously knows.

The second moment, or the stage in the development or "theogony" of God, entails the abolishing of his abstract Universality and the positing of Himself as an Other. God begets His Son, the Other. He posits the Other of Himself in the Creation of the world. What is thus created, this "otherness", or "other-being", divides itself into two sides: physical nature and finite spirit. What is thus created is,

2. Philosophy of Religion, Vol.II. p.111.

therefore, an "other", and is placed at first outside God. This moment in God's particularisation or diremption, represents the necessary self-externalising, the logical act of going out of Himself into finitude. As Hegel says, "the finite is therefore an essential moment of the infinite in the nature of God, and thus it may be said it is God Himself who renders Himself finite, who produces determinations within Himself.. He wills the finite; He Himself posits it as an "Other" and thus Himself becomes an "Other" than Himself - a finite - for He has as "Other" appeared to Himself. This "otherness", however, is the contradiction of Himself within Himself. He is thus the finite in relation to that which is finite. But the truth is that this finiteness is only an appearance, a phenomenal shape in which He possesses Himself."³.

There are three discernible ends to be served by God's "beholding Himself in Himself"⁴ or particularising Himself as Creation, nature and finite spirit. (1) God becomes conscious, more than subjective, but objective in his particularisation.⁵ But this antithetical "otherness", or self-differential moment serves as the

3. Ibid., Vol.II. p.198.

4. Ibid., Vol.II. p.198.

5. Ibid., Vol.II. p.335.

necessary process by which Absolute Spirit lifts the finite up to Himself and consequently annuls Himself as finite. This self-determined process provides the means whereby God returns to Himself..."And only on this return is He God, without the world God is not God."⁶

(2) Besides providing the necessary means by which God comprehends Himself as God, the second determination (the particularisation of God as an 'other', creation, finiteness and nature), illustrates the unity of the Divine and Natural. Nature is His creation, and He lets His power be known in it, though not His power only, but His wisdom as well. This wisdom reveals itself in what it produces by the presence of arrangement in accordance with an end.⁷ The idea that God is estranged from Nature and that the order of Nature or the laws of Nature are introduced with the thought that God must miraculously intervene in nature in some individual thing contradicts His creation. "Whenever", so Hegel says, "God's relation to the world in general is defined in a miraculous manner as requiring His immediate manifestation in it in a particular way, for a

6. Ibid., Vol.I. p.200.

7. Ibid., Vol.II p.189.

definite end in a limited sphere, it is then that His true miracle in nature is misunderstood."⁸. Clarifying what Hegel has in mind leads us to the supreme end desired by God in the moment of the "Other". (3) "The true miracle in nature is the manifestation of spirit, and the true manifestation of spirit is fundamentally the spirit of man and his consciousness of rationality of nature, his consciousness that in these scattered elements, and in these manifold contingent things conformity to laws and reason are essentially present."⁹. "The true end", illuminating his point further, "and the true realisation of the end are not present within nature as such, but rather they are essentially to be found in consciousness. He manifests Himself in nature, but His essential appearing is that He appears in consciousness, in His reflection or reappearance, in such a way that in self-consciousness it reappears that His end is just to be known by consciousness, and that He is an end for consciousness."¹⁰. ...That is to say, it seems that finite consciousness is a moment of Spirit itself. In God's self-differentiation and self-diremption, God knows Himself as He

8. Ibid., Vol.II. P.186.

9. Ibid., Vol.II. P.186.

10. Ibid., Vol.II. P.189.

posits Himself in finite spirit, or finite consciousness. Hegel's own words bring further light on this stage, especially note how "humanity" is in God, when he says: "God is Spirit but He is spirit in any essential sense only so far as He is known to be the self-consciousness of Himself, the eternal act of creation, and in such way that this creation of an "Other" is a return to Himself, a return to the knowledge of Himself." Since it belongs to the essential character of God Himself that He should be in His very nature the other of Himself, and that this other is a determination or quality within His own nature, so that He thereby returns to Himself as the human element is reconciled to God, it follows that we thus get the determination which is expressed by saying that humanity is in God. Thus man knows that what is human is a moment of the Divine itself, and consequently he stands in a free relation to God. For that to which he stands related to as to his own essential being has the essential characteristics of humanity in itself, thus, on the one hand, man is related, as it were, to the negation of his merely natural life, and, on the other hand,

1. Ibid., Vol. II. p. 222-223.

2. Phenomenology of Mind, Vol. II. p. 276.

to a God in whom the human element is itself affirmative and an essential characteristic.. what exists in men as concrete individuals is represented as being something divine and substantial, and man in all that constitutes his essential nature, in all that has any value for him, is present in what is Divine."¹¹.

The third moment of God (analogous we may say, though Hegel would not use such presentational language, to the individual's realisation of his divided existence and the return of the particular estrangement into the Universal - the moment when the division between man's spirit, and his "other" nature, is abolished) is the moment when God returns from that "otherness" to the realm of perfect individuality or self-consciousness itself.¹² In this sphere, knowledge maintains itself - its otherness - in its opposites. The particularity or otherness succumbs and expires in its universality, i.e., in its knowledge, which is true Being reconciling itself with itself. God becomes concrete spirit by the fact of His passing through and realising the three moments of His nature. The movement through the content of His whole self in this way constitutes His

11. Ibid., Vol. II. p. 222-223.

12. Phenomenology of Mind. Vol. II. p.776.

actual reality. When determined, God is not as yet the true God. In so far as He is no longer determined and limited in His actually existing manifestation, is He Spirit which exists in and for itself.¹³

Before the return to individuality, the two sides of God seemed contradictory and absolutely independent, but when He advances to the third moment, the two previous moments are unified and He contains within Himself the totality of the transition. Within the third moment, the synthesis is a higher unity. A unity which preserves the essence of both opposites, while annihilating them as opposite, irreconcilable antitheses. Unlike the orthodox trinitarians who have an either/or God, contradictory opposites without a higher synthesis, Hegel claims that his views, recognising both/and, God's universality, and difference, and the recognition of the necessary return into Spirit, makes God's essence knowable and comprehensible.

13. Philosophy of Religion. Vol.I. p.211.

4. The Appropriation of the Absolute Idea:
"Aneignung".

We have seen what God is in His essential nature: He is the life process of the trinity, in which the Universal puts itself into antithesis with itself, and in this antithesis is identical with itself. God in His element of Eternity represents what encloses itself in union with itself, the enclosing of Himself with Himself. But there are two sides to the Notion of Religion. The side which concerns the estrangement of God in His "Other" and the reconciliation and return of God to Individuality, or complete self-consciousness, and the other side, which entails the "elevation of man to God," or the subjective consciousness which is conscious to itself of God. When the subjective human element and the objective Divine element meet and realise their essential unity, Religion realises itself as an active Divine-Human consciousness. We are informed that this perfect at-oneness occurred in the Absolute Religion, the revelation of Christianity. But before we can discuss the nature of this stage of consciousness, we must inquire further into the process by which

man comprehends himself as a moment of God's own existence. Relevant to this investigation, is the question: "What situation in man's consciousness necessitated the transition from the pre-Christian or pre-revealed religious to the Absolute Religion?" Because we plan to give special consideration to the three particular levels by which the human appropriates the Divine within the Revealed Religion, our discussion at this point will be concerned with the three general religions which to some degree coincide with man's appropriation of God.

In another context we noted that Hegel views each State, each Civilisation, with its particular arts, religion and science, as embodying a phase of the universal Idea or World Spirit. In like manner, he contends that each Religion prior to the actual realisation represented a period of the development of the Absolute Religion. In some unique sense, the History of Religions coincides with the History of the World. The gradations of the World Spirit from the not free to "all being free," corresponds to the movements which Religion goes through before reaching its completed, and necessary goal.

The first stage, or more immediate form of Religion, is Nature Religion, which answers to the childhood of humanity. Spirit and Nature exist in an immediate unity and the spirit by its absorption in this potential unity does not advance to the condition of separation. Note the parallel in Hegel's view of freedom in the Oriental world.

The second stage, is the age of youth (the age of Spiritual Individuality) or the emergence of religious freedom. Three forms or types of religion are treated in this stage of development: The Religion of sublimity, or Judaism; of Beauty, or the Greek; of outward vitality and utility, or the Roman Religion. But because of the inherent contradictions in these religions, including God's antithetical "Other" being posited and explained in an abstract, unresolved manner, the revelation of the Absolute Religion was necessary and inevitable. The third stage; the revelation of the Notion in its diremption and reunion, is fully revealed in Christianity; the religion of ripe manhood.

But what caused the human spirit to break

with the preceding religious interpretations and posit a new version of reality? What provoked the ordinary religious piety to picture their deity in an immediate, sensuous appearance? The substance of the transition to the Absolute Religion is the same as the movement to the Absolute State in Hegel's "Philosophy of History." It is the unhappiness of the age, the negation of the Roman consciousness as it appears in Stoicism, scepticism and Judaism. Though the universalism of the Roman Empire, including its definite consciousness of world history and its contribution of formal personality to the spiritual consciousness of man, was a positive development; its negativity was that it allowed the objective consciousness, embodied in its Emperor to vitiate subjective consciousness. While the Roman world invested each independent being with a recognised abstract right, this legal personality was in the long run negated. The Individual was subject to the inflexible authority of one, the Emperor. All independent persons were ruled by the Imperial head of the State. Instead of the co-relation between the

objective and subjective consciousness, the objective reality overcame the subjective human ego. This was the infinite misery of the Roman world. The Greek had decidedly the consciousness of himself as a spiritual being, and of the spiritual character of the ruling power of the universe. But this consciousness was not pure; the spiritual was known only as in immediate unity with the natural and sensible. The highest spiritual conceptions of the Greeks were only such as art could represent, in which the sensuous is employed as mediums of pure thought. Furthermore, Stoicism and scepticism, with their abstract formulations, forced the subjective self-consciousness to retreat and withdraw from the relative world into the inwardness of its own self-consciousness ego. Another school of Greek thinking, Platonism and neo-Platonism, by their devaluation of material existence, caused the human ego to renunciate the world and escape the discord and solipsism of the age. The Jewish emphasis on the utter transcendence of God contributed to the doubt and frustration of the day. As God became more and more Universal and less and less

1. Philosophy of Religion, Vol. III, p. 112.
2. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 113.

concretely hypostasised in the symbols of the cult, the piety of the Jewish law became more and more to exercise the dominant role. Under the extreme requirements of the law, the Jewish consciousness, represented in the Davidic confessions, felt itself condemned, humbled, broken and annihilated.

The unhappy, despairing consciousness, the infinite sorrow and tormenting uncertainty concerning God's relationship to man was, so Hegel says, the birthplace of the impulse felt by spirit to picture God's spiritual nature in a specific, real and actual manner..."This need (sorrow and helplessness) was created by the progress of history, by the gradual advance of the World Spirit. This immediate impulse, this longing which wishes and craves for something definite, the instinct, as it were, of Spirit, which is impelled to seek for this, demanded such an appearance in time, the manifestation of God as the infinite Spirit in the form of a real man."¹ And.."it was to Christ that the Idea (God's eternal movements and ideality) when it was ripe and the time fulfilled could attach itself, and in Him only could it see itself realised."²

1. Philosophy of Religion, Vol.III. p.112.

2. Ibid., Vol.III. p.113.

But during this period of doubt, anxiety and despair, Hegel makes it quite clear that the thinking, speculative consciousness was certain that finiteness was a part of God's Being. The conceptual mind (Begriffen) grasps (Ergriefft) the conception (Begriff) of God's essential triune nature. The conceptual mind apprehends the circular, becoming process of God, whereby the Idea posits itself into antithesis with itself and returns to itself in completed self-consciousness. The antithesis or "Other" for the speculative mind is.. "the Son of God comprehended in pure ideality but reduced to limited and particular conceptions, it is the world, nature and finite spirit."³ The speculative mind recognises that God's "Other" or His negation contains within itself affirmation of God's identity with His full self-consciousness as Spirit. The stage of negation, the self-positing of the "Other", the kenosis of the Father, the self-externalising of the Logos, constitutes the implicit unity between God and Man. The rational mind, motivated by necessity rather than contingency, envisages God's self-differentiation and restoration to

3. Philosophy of History, p.336.

Philosophy of the Mind, Vol. II, p.332.

Philosophy of Religion, Vol. III, p.250.

Himself and because of this cyclical process, it can see the infinite in the finite and finite in the infinite.

But it was not in this abstract form that spiritual truths could be first mediated to the consciousness and knowledge of man. On the contrary, for the ordinary man, so Hegel says, with mixed intellectual constitution, spiritual intelligence is a gradual growth out of the natural and visible beginnings to the truly spiritual. If the harmony between man and God is to exist as certain, actual and real, it must exist for the sensuous, presentational consciousness in the form of an object separated from other objects, and in the individual man that represents the at-oneness between God and man. The figurative, pictorial, representative mind must form a mental image of the Divine nature to explain the reconciling process as an event... "the event of God's emptying Himself of Himself, relinquishing His Divine Being through His factual incarnation and death."⁴ Hegel says: "The act of God's differentiation implies for this mode of thinking that the Son gets the determination of the Other as such, that He exists as a free personality, independently for Himself."⁵ For this mode of

4. Phenomenology of the Mind, Vol.II. p.792.

5. Philosophy of Religion, Vol.III. p.230.

consciousness, God "In the fullness of time," made explicit to the ordinary pictorial mind the implicit unity between Himself and His "Other". But, while He conceded to make known His identity with the finite spirit (or revealed the finite subjectivity in His own Being), the sensuous existence in which Spirit is embodied is only a transitional stage. "Christ dies: only as dead is he exalted to heaven and sits at the right hand of God; only there is he Spirit."⁶

It was only after his death that the Son of man became fully declared as the Son of God: it was only then that he could be fully recognised in this character, that is his spiritual character, or that he could completely manifest himself in it. Men were reconciled to the spiritual wretchedness which he had passed through not while Christ as a historic Individual was with them, but only afterwards, on the Day of Pentecost, that the Apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost: then first the scales fell from their eyes, and they all knew their Master.

This is to say, the historical figure of Christ represents the immediate moment of the

6. Philosophy of History, p.337.

Spirit's unveiling itself as the Notion, but only after the death of the "mental image" could the Spirit come upon His friends...

"Only then were they able to conceive the true Idea of God, viz., that in Christ man is redeemed and reconciled; acknowledged to be Spirit, and the fact proclaimed that only by stripping himself of his finiteness and surrendering himself to pure self-consciousness, does he attain the truth. Christ-man as man - in whom the unity of God and man has appeared, has in his death, and his history of Spirit, a history which every man has to accomplish in himself in order to exist as Spirit, or to become a child of God, a citizen of His Kingdom."⁷

It is then, so Hegel contends, not the historical, by-gone personality (a subject of theological thought in Hegel's generation) regarded from the unspiritual birth narratives; his miracles; or his early domestic relations, which concerns the Christian religion. On the contrary, this type of unspiritual thinking, this method of objectifying reality, cannot approach the essence of truth which is "posited in the Christian religion."

7. Ibid., p.340.

The death of the Son annuls the human side of Christ's nature and inaugurates the transition into the religious sphere, i.e., into the Spiritual Community. In his death, God returns from the stage of estrangement to Himself and "it is because of it that He is Spirit."⁸ The negation of the negation, the abolishing of God's "Other" is symbolised (though Hegel would not use pictorial language to describe the inner relations of the Trinity) in the resurrection of Christ. He who first was regarded as a teacher, a friend, a martyr, as an individual under the limitation of sense, now comes to have a totally different position. The atoning death considered in a "spiritual way"⁹ becomes the means of salvation and the central point of reconciliation. Though the faith when it is coming into existence, begins with faith in the individual, "this individual man is changed by the Spiritual Community, He is recognised to be God and is characterised as the Son of God and as comprising all of the finite which attaches to subjectivity as such in its development, but as being subjectivity He is separated from substantiality."¹⁰

Because the "supreme Idea" is deposited in the

8. Philosophy of Religion, Vol.III. p.96.

9. Ibid., Vol.III. p.97.

10. Ibid., Vol.III. p.115.

Spiritual Community, and because the community comprehends the Son of Man as God's "Other" - the "Other", which is only a passing moment in God's reconciling process - the community no longer stands in need of any relative proof of God's manifestation, i.e., special miracles, historical verification of events, dates, which are, after all, mere probabilities gathered from subjective data. The Spiritual Community... "has the Spirit in itself, which leads into all truth, and which, by means of its truth or Spirit, exercises upon Spirit the true kind of force, a power in which Spirit has left to its absolute freedom."¹¹ With "the Spirit as its teacher"... the person of Christ has been decreed by the Church to be the Son of God."¹²

Commenting further on the relationship between the Spiritual Community (the Church, God's Kingdom constituted by Christ's disciples) and the historical Jesus, Hegel says of the investigative methods ordinarily utilised for substantiating the Jesus of History: Contemporary... "investigations into the historicity of Christ, begin from the point of view which implies that the real question is as to the sensuous element in the appearance of Christ, as to what

11. Ibid., Vol.III. p.116.

12. Ibid., Vol.III. p.121.

13. Ibid., Vol.III. p.121-122.

is historical in it, as if the verification of Spirit and of its truth was contained in such narratives regarding one who was represented as a historical person and in a historical fashion. This truth, however, is sure and certain in itself, although it has anhistorical starting point."¹³. Unlike the empirical method used by the ecclesiastical councils for determining truth,...."the true Christian content of faith is to be justified by philosophy, not by history. What Spirit does is not history; it takes to do only with what exists on its own account, is in-and-for-itself, not with something past, but, on the contrary, simply with what is present."¹⁴.

5. The Relationship between Vorstellung and Begriff.

A. The ways in which the Religious Consciousness appropriates the Idea.

But the question remains: "How does the subjective consciousness apprehend the objective, the Absolute Spirit?" or "How does the subjective mind appropriate, interpret and explain the appearance of the Divine, the reconciliation of the subjective and objective

13. Ibid., Vol.III. p.111.

14. Ibid., Vol.III. p.121-122.

consciousness?" In Hegel's developmental scheme, the subjective consciousness of the Absolute Spirit is essentially and intrinsically a process. A development from the lower to the higher, from the determinate mode of consciousness to the indeterminate mediated in the Absolute Idea or Notion, constitutes the necessary progress of the Idea's reception. The three steps, by which the finite subject realises that the infinite subject has been revealed to him as certain, sure and actual, are, on the one hand, processes which precede the revelation of the Absolute Idea, that is to say, the religions prior to the final revelation begin with the barest of categories, feeling; the antithesis of which is thought, idea, or ordinary sensuous versions of reality, and the ultimate synthesis reached in the Absolute Religion, utilises the thesis of feeling, idea, and culminates in the Notion (Begriff). On the other hand, the three ways or modes of comprehending the Divine-human relationship are triadic within the Christian religion. Feeling or immediate knowledge, and ideas, the thesis and antithesis, are the lower, dispensable developments in the dialectic,

which are completed when the Notion is known in-and-for itself. Hegel's problem in his "Philosophy of History" and "Philosophy of Religion" lectures, is simply to illuminate the inevitable and necessary transitions of the Idea. Before embarking on a discussion of the two lower developments, it is well to point out Hegel's confusing presentation of Vorstellung. He seems unable to make up his mind clearly as to whether the characteristic quality of the Vorstellung lies in its relation to feeling, or its relation to picture-thinking. Sometimes Hegel conjoins in a single sentence these two ways of differentiating the Vorstellung of religion from the Begriff of Philosophy. A good example is a passage in the "Philosophy of Right" where he sums up the whole matter as follows: "The Universal Spirit exists concretely in art in the form of perception and image, in religion in the form of feeling and pictorial imaginative thinking, and in philosophy in the form of pure free thought."¹. But because Hegel does separate these two forms of knowledge in some places, particularly in his "Philosophy of Religion" lectures, we

1. Philosophy of Right, Dydels translation, page. 431.

will treat each knowledge separately.

The first position of the finite spirit, or the primary way the naive religious piety apprehends the unity of the Divine and human nature is through Feeling. Feeling is, according to Hegel, the immediate form in which any matter is posited in consciousness as ours, its quality as our own. But he says.. "the most contradictory elements are to be found in feeling; the most debased, as well as the highest, and noblest, have a place there."².

God, if he is confined to feeling, has no advantages over what is worst, even "the kingliest flower springs from the same soil and side by side with the rankest weed."³.

"All religions, even the most false and unworthy, exist in our feelings, and hearts, just as much as these that are true. There are feelings which are immoral, unjust, godless, just as much as there are feelings which are moral, just and pious."⁴. Furthermore, when man bases his knowledge of God simply on feeling, he withdraws into the sphere of sheer arbitrariness, mere contingency or fortuitousness. Even, continues Hegel, the animals have feelings, immediate and instinctive knowledge.

2. Philosophy of Religion, Vol.I. p.130.

3. Ibid., Vol. I. p.130.

4. Ibid., Vol. III. p.181.

Though feeling is the sphere in which the Being of God is immediately exhibited, the Being of God, or Being in-and-for-itself, cannot be localised or discovered in the region of immediate knowledge. God's being is independent and self-existent, but this independence and self-existent content is not to be found in the area of feeling. If anything, this content is negated. Immediate knowledge knows what God is, but not what He is. The subjective consciousness is so immersed in its relationship to God, that it fails to clothe this relationship with any objective content. Realising the inadequacy of immediate knowledge,... "we must," so Hegel says, "therefore look around us for another basis for God. In feeling, we have not found God either in accordance with His independent Being, or in accordance with His content. In immediate knowledge, the object was not possessed of Being; on the contrary, its Being was found in the knowing subject, which discovered the basis of this Being in Feeling."⁵ "A man who has to do with Feeling only is not as yet complete; he is a beginner in knowledge, in action."⁶

5. Ibid., Vol.I. p.37.

6. Ibid., Vol.I. p.37.

But all is not lost; for in itself, religious feeling contains the necessity, the inherent contradiction for the advancement to the stage of perception and reflection. That is to say, when the empirical subject seeks to comprehend the "Other", or his relationship to God, he is driven to reflect on and seek to posit the distinction between himself and the "Other" to whom he is immediately related. In order to maintain fellowship or community with others, the person motivated by feeling withdraws from his own particularity, his own ideas and opinions, and participates in a common "object" which forms the basis for objective discussions of this immediate knowledge.

The next stage of the religious consciousness, necessitated by the inherent divisions between the Universal and the subjective consciousness on the level of immediate knowledge, is when the spiritual idea exists as an object for consciousness. The infinite sorrow, the despairing and unhappy introverted consciousness perceiving itself caught in its own subjectivity, rises above its own arbitrariness and posits an object or mental image to represent the unity between the divine and

human nature. Within this stage of consciousness, man attempts to reach absolute knowledge by figuratively and pictorially representing the union and by abstract reflection on the relationship.

The content which perceived in its immediacy in feeling, now receives some objective reference which mediates this knowledge. The non-speculative consciousness, called by Hegel - the ordinary mind, or the stage of thinking when "religion can be said to be reasoning naively" - clothes thought or the Notion (Begriff) in sensuous imagery. This presentational thinking presents the speculative under the guise of the natural, the outward and sensuous. The reconciliation between God and man, or, in general, God's relationship to the world, the finite spirit and the realm of nature, is expressed in analogies taken from natural life and events. The popular idea of the creation of the world is a *Vorstellung* (figurative bodying forth) of some rational truth. The philosophical truth for which it stands is that the Idea posits itself forth into externality and "Otherness" and becomes the world. Truly understood,

this is not an act or event in time, but an eternal or timeless process of the Idea. But popular, representational thinking conceives the eternal truth of the creation as an event which happened. But, if an event, (God's logical and necessary differentiation is taken as an act in a sensuous manner), the creation is made to appear as if it were an accidental and arbitrary act of God. God either might or might not have created the world. To "create" is an image borrowed from the technical operations of man, and, if God's eternal act is represented as happening in time, the Universal Idea is obscured through an interest in what remains contingent and arbitrary. Again, in this type of figurative thought, the persons of the Godhead are represented as Father and Son, and by the very fact that the ordinary mind clings to the concept of "Son", it is lowering and transmuting the moments of the Notion to the level of imaginative thought. When the representational mind expresses the relationship between the Son and the Father in organic terms, it is..."dragging pictures and presentations into the realm of thought."⁷ The truth this

7. Phenomenology of the Mind, Vol.II. p.733.

designation "Son" stands for, according to Hegel, is the differentiation of the Notion within itself. The Universal, i.e., The Father, puts forth the particular, i.e., The Son, from itself. The incarnation, i.e., the Idea of the God-man, is a Vorstellung which stands for the central truth of all religions, namely the unity of God and Man. Similarly, when the concept of the Trinity is elaborated by the ordinary mind, the persons or moments Hegel would say, are numerically considered as three externally complete moments in relation to the other. But utilising.. "childlike relations or childlike natural forms."⁸ Vorstellung conceives the inner qualities and relations in a sensuous, natural and external shape. For that matter, so Hegel writes in another context, the popular idea of God as a person is itself a Vorstellung, which stands for the truth that the absolute is spirit, not a cause or mechanism, but Personality, self-consciousness, or Absolute Idea.⁹

Representational thinking by its very nature and dependence on sense-apprehension and sensory categories is chained to the transient,

8. Philosophy of Religion, Vol.III. p.25.

9. Ibid., Vol.II. p.240.

the perishable and the contingent. Its pictures of God derive their content from the sphere of immediate, determinate forms. It envisages what is timeless and infinite under the conditions of time and space. Vorstellung seeks signs and wonders - sensible manifestations of the Divine power's presence. It perpetuates the sensible presence of Christ in the form of the consecrated Host; the host by transubstantiation becomes the very body of Christ, and is adored as God sensibly present before the eyes of the faithful. The presentational mentality sanctions crusades to the places frequented by Jesus in his earthly life. Journeys are made to the "holy land" to determine the place of Jesus' grave, and so forth. Jesus' words, "Why seek ye the living among the dead, He is not here, but is arisen," do not, according to Hegel, appear to discourage these fruitless quests. The Notional Mind, the mind that knows the relative moments of the Absolute, realises that Christ is neither here nor there, but within you, in the living heart. When conscience, will and reason see him there, and welcome him there, they shall find him there.¹⁰ Furthermore, it is natural

10. Ibid., Vol.III. p. 235.

for the *Vorstellung* (the figurative mind) to occupy itself with the eye-witness accounts of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Commenting on what he calls "synthetic" thinking, Hegel writes: "It is not the Notion, but bare externality and particularity, merely the historical manner in which spirit once upon a time appeared, the soulless recollection of an ideally presented historical figure and its past."¹¹ When representational, metaphorical, pictorial thinking relies on the unspiritual to prove its spirituality; it naturally (on the basis of Hegel's concern for the completed Idea or the totality of the moments) falls into contradictions and one-sidedness. The proper perspective is, according to Hegel, to regard the determinate mode as a passing moment of God's revelation.

General Idea (*Vorstellung* advancing to the realm of reflection) supervenes upon the immediacy of sens-apprehension, and brings distinctions into the apparently simple; it isolates the different qualities and aspects of things, and, by the terms in which it crystallises them, finds them in opposition

11. *Phenomenology of the Mind*, Vol. II. p.776.

to one another. When this separation and classification is done, according to Hegel, the one fundamental characteristic which constitutes the essence of the object is held fast and is present before the mind as a totality within itself. While the reflective consciousness takes up a polemical attitude to the sensuous and pictorial, Hegel believes that its explications remain entangled with the one-sidedness which characterised the sensuous, contingent images of the representational mind. The reflective consciousness attempts to hold firmly to the factual, known object. In the process of securing its reference point in the temporal, in the finite (the historical development of the known in the phenomenal sphere) it lowers the infinite in a series of multiple contradictions. While the *Vorstellung* (as idea) is concerned to perceive intellectually the differences between the finite and infinite, it remains, Hegel is careful to point out, on the level of difference as difference, and fails to go beyond the unity in the difference. For example, if the abstract consciousness posits

12. *Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. II, p. 200.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 57. Vol. I.

the finite as being limited by the infinite, and that the infinite stands on one side or apart from the finite, it follows that the infinite itself is limited. It has its boundary in the finite and it is that which the finite is not. The infinite has something which is on the yonder side of the finite, and is thus finite and limited. Instead of comprehending the unity between the finite and infinite, the ordinary mind drives an even deeper wedge between the two. The two remain isolated, exclusive and fixed determinations. Thus it is that the ordinary consciousness leaves the Notion in a contradictory state—widening the gulf between the Absolute and the human. By its extreme emphasis on the historical... "it degrades the content into an historical imaginative idea and heirloom handed down by tradition."¹² It preserves and retains an external lifeless entity.. "devoid of knowledge," and while doing so... "it misses the inner necessity of the Notion."¹³. But the speculative consciousness, motivated by the logical necessity inherent in the Notion, abolishes the contradictions between the universal and particular, and in doing so..

12. Philosophy of Religion. Vol.II. p.240.

13. Ibid., p.57. Vol. I.

"brings fluidity into these hard and fast thoughts and exhibits, along with their differences, the connection by which they organise themselves into one whole."¹⁴.

Religion, the stage in which the absolute is cognised neither in a purely sensuous way nor in a purely rational way gives way to the Notion. Religion does not get beyond the accidental, capricious positing of reconciliation in an historical event in time and space. It represents the essential, necessary estrangement from God in a factual manner in its doctrines of the Incarnation, the death of Christ, his resurrection and ascension. The eternal truth of spirit, wherein the human mind in its separation from God is at the same time identical with being and bound to recognise this identity, is represented, symbolised and taught in a contradictory, sensuous and precarious way. But Hegel says that the figurative thought represents the highest kind of thinking of which the masses of men are capable. Pure abstract thought, the thought which takes the differentiation of God in his "Other", and conceives of these determinations as moments

14. Ibid., Vol. I. p. 59.

instead of fixed, isolated reference points, is beyond the ordinary, naive piety of the religious mind.

Spirit, to become completely reconciled to itself, must drive beyond the differentiation of the "other" to the stage of completion, or the moment of individuality. Divorced from the religious naivete which thinks of God in "homely" pictures and in immediate sensuous and independent categories, the Notion, or Absolute Idea now under the competent guide of Philosophical Reason and logical necessity, comprehends its determinations as Ideal moments. Furthermore,..."The Idea (Begriff) when stripped from the contingency of the Vorstellung, is seen in its perfect clearness, pure transparency, being home with self."¹⁵.

That is to say, when religion moves beyond the one-sided pictorial thinking to the Notion, the determinations and differences are absorbed and consumed..."And this means no element or moment of the Absolute stands apart or is independent of the rest, but each appears as something that is a show or semblance in relation to the other...Then every distinction, every distinction, every definite element is something transparent,

15. Ibid., Vol. III. P.364.

not existing on its own account in a dark and impenetrable fashion. This implies that the objects distinguished are not independent and do not offer resistance to each other, but are posited in their ideality."¹⁶.

The Notion can break away from the things that are - as Aristotle says, "First for us", - the immediate appearances and apprehensions of sense which are continually changing, and reach those things that are "first by nature" - the law or principles which manifest themselves no more or no less in one set of appearances than in another. Because the self has the capacity for transcending itself, contemplating itself and emancipating itself from the limitations, not only of individual circumstances but even of generic nature, the fulfilled self-consciousness generated by Reason and logical necessity can envisage himself and the objects related to self in a unified relationship. This capacity for self-transcendence, which comprehends in one completed whole, the self and the not-self, the self and the world in correlation or in organic unity, gives man a universal vantage point. The element of

16. Ibid., Vol. 1. p.155.

abstraction or the ordinary consciousness which cannot get beyond the contradictory relationships and unresolved dualism of cause and effect, substance and accident, force and expression, inner and outer being, finds its completion in the Notion, described by Hegel as the "correlativity of given opposites". The Notion comprehends the reciprocity of correlative differences, or latent unities which manifest themselves as differences, yet, in their differences, are still one with themselves. Only the ideal Notion can overcome the dualism which Aristotle had left between the pure intelligence and the intelligible world which is its object. The Notion holds the Universal, particular and individual moments of God together and realises that each moment contains in itself the other two movements. For the Notion, the Universal which had become particular in its "other" (nature and finite spirit and, for the ordinary mentality, individual man) now returns into itself. The particular negates itself, dies, rises again from the dead and ascends to the Father. In this act, the particular, which was sundered from the

universal, becomes identical with it.

Reconciliation is complete and the estrangement between God and His "Other" is overcome.

The Absolute Notion, or Begriff, lifts the "revealed Religion" out of the region of caprice and accidental opinions, invests the naive analogies and pictorial representations with objectivity, and, if further, transforms immediate knowledge of God's "Other" into the sphere where knowledge maintains itself in itself in its otherness and in its opposites. In the Notion, utilising Hegel's phrasing, ... "particularity succumbs and expires in its universality, i.e. in its knowledge, which is true being reconciling itself with itself."¹⁷.

The Absolute Idea is the systematic recognition of the fact that there is no position without a negative and the negative is yet only the path along which thought passes to a fuller positive. This higher reality, this grand synthesis, comprehended only by the Notion, realises that the infinite has appeared in the finite and the finite in the infinite, and that, as a consequence, each no longer forms a separate realm of

17. Phenomenology of the Mind. Vol.II. p.794.

producing abstractions or contractions. With particular reference to the sensuous history in which Christianity first appeared, the Notion realises that this history is the mere point of departure (ausgangspunkt) for the spirit of faith. The historical Jesus is only... "the garment of flesh from which spirit has passed."¹⁸ As determined, (God in His Other), God is not yet the true God. In so far as He is no longer determined and limited in his actually existing manifestation is he Spirit, manifesting which exists in and for self.¹⁹ Only the Notion can mediate religious knowledge free from the contingencies of historical research, the splits of immediacy, perception, being and not being, finite and infinite, human and divine. These contradictions contain within themselves the basic unity which drives beyond the polarities to a realised unity within the differences. Under the competent guide of Absolute reason, the Spirit is extricated from transitoriness, change, the vicissitudes of the world, from evil and from division, and is represented as absolute consciousness - being in and for

18. Philosophy of Religion. Vol.I. p.211.

19. Ibid., p.211. Vol. I.

self.

Another aspect of the Notion, of particular concern to Religion, is the full realisation and actualisation of the Spirit when it has taken up its abode in the religious community. "At first," according to Hegel, "however, the Idea appears in a single individual in a material, pictorial form; this must be discarded and the real signification, the eternally true essence, must be brought into view. This is the faith of the Spiritual Community when it is coming into existence. It starts from faith in the individual; this individual man is changed by the Spiritual Community. He is recognised to be God and is characterised as the Son of God and as comprising all the finite which attaches to subjectivity as such in its development, but as being subjectivity He is separated from substantiality." ²⁰.

But the death of Christ, spiritually interpreted by the friends of Jesus at Pentecost, signifies the cancellation and transcendence of the immediate, material, and sensuous manifestation. At Pentecost, the

20. Ibid., Vol. III, page 115

21. Philosophy of Religion, Vol. III, p. 120

real inauguration point of the Church and Revealed Religion, the friends of Jesus.. "were able to conceive of the true idea of God, viz. that in Christ man is redeemed and reconciled; for in Him the idea of eternal truth is recognised, the essence of man acknowledged to be Spirit, and the fact proclaimed by stripping himself of his finiteness and surrendering himself to pure self-consciousness, does he attain the truth." ²¹ In his death, Christ-man as man, has presented the eternal history of Spirit - a history which every man has to accomplish in himself in order to exist as spirit, or to become a child of the kingdom. ²²

Within the Spiritual Community, the realised Kingdom of God on earth, the community in which the individual is born into, and the community where he is destined to share in its truth, ²³ the Idea reaches perfection and true ideality. The religious communion comprehends the inner movements of Spirit through the "Other" and the necessary and inevitable return to the Universal. The Spiritual Community apprehends the "nowness",

21. Philosophy of History, p. 340.

22. Ibid., p. 340.

23. Philosophy of Religion, Vol. III. p. 127.

the essential contemporaneity of the reconciliation. For it, the present contains the past and the future in it, as moments. Because of its realised content, the community has no concern for the origins and primitive embodiments of the determinate idea, or for that matter for what the actual human being (incarnating the divine spirit) has spoken.²⁴ It is free from the verification and authentication of its doctrines on sensuous, empirical grounds. Within the Community, doctrines and dogmas are worked out and received their final amplification and development. And.. "whether the community gives its expression to its consciousness on the basis of written documents, or attaches its own self-determination to tradition, is not at all an essential one."²⁵ Death abrogates the human side of Christ's nature and inaugurates the transition to the religious, spiritual sphere. The teachings of Him who was imaginatively and pictorially presented by the primitive religious mind serve as guides, directions and examples to the community which completely knows the Absolute

24. Phenomenology of the Mind, Vol. II. p. 775.

25. Philosophy of Religion, Vol. II. p. 125.

in and for itself.

6. Evaluation of Hegel's Philosophy.

Criticisms of Hegel's dialectic have been legion, and under the impact of various schools of existentialism they have become familiar - possibly more familiar than Hegel himself. Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Marx, Schelling in the 19th and 20th century have exposed Hegel's transcendentised, essentialistic version of reality. Instead of pursuing these criticisms directly, we will concentrate on Hegel's distinction between Vorstellung and Begriff - pointing out his unsatisfactory relationship to historical Christianity.

Before we can embark on this task, some mention must be made of the philosophical problem Hegel inherited from his predecessors and contemporaries. His dialectical solution to this dilemma establishes his treatment of historical Christianity. Kant, Fichte, Schleiermacher, and Schelling had left the relationship between the subject and object, between thinking and Being, the infinite and finite, the self-conscious Ego and the

Absolute Ego in an antithetical relationship. Kant, wrestling with the distinctions which philosophy had assumed to exist between subject and object, between thought and things, sought to abolish this cleavage - not by suppressing one of the factors, but by showing that thought and things are really related in all our thinking. But though Kant, as against Hume, vindicates a certain reality for knowledge, it is still not a knowledge of realities. In place of the old dualism, he creates a new dualism - now between phenomenon and nuomenon. There is a world of things in themselves to which the mind cannot perceive. As one interpretor of Kant has remarked: "The dualism between God and Man is so far mutually exclusive for Kant, that what is done by man in History appears to be necessarily done without God. What is done by God, on the contrary - as, for example, a revelation - appears like a hand from behind the clouds thrust suddenly into the web of human affairs."¹. The conception of the "thing-in-itself", the relation of the unknown object to the phenomenon of experience, became the starting point of a

1. Alexander, Archibald, "A Short History of Philosophy", page 150.

new series of speculative thought which led ultimately to the efforts of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel to explain the world as a system of Reason.

Fichte, concerned to portray the unity of subject and object in the self-conscious ego, established a system of pure subjective idealism. All that is the ego, all that we know belongs to and takes place within our consciousness. Reality is experience, and it is nothing more. Hence the Philosophy of Fichte starts with the demand that the facts of experience shall be examined as facts of self-consciousness. While he denied Kant's "thing-in-itself", he did so at the expense of all reality. His philosophy involved a dualism between idealism and realism - an alternating, a reciprocity of the two sides (the ego and non-ego) which could only be overcome by affirming the reality of the ego. In his attempt to reduce nature to a mere negative condition, a self-created object of thought, and to make spirit all in all, Fichte turned the life of the spirit itself into something shadowy and spectral - a

conflict with a ghost that could not be laid.

Shelling's philosophy arose to supplement the one-sided idealism of Fichte. Convinced that Nature, the external world, comprised the object of knowledge, or a necessary parallel, (existence manifests a like intelligence to the spiritual world), Schelling set forth an objective Idealism which so completely merged and identified the difference between nature and spirit, that the reality of both was lost and the absolute became a pure point of indifference to be apprehended only by mystic contemplation or in intuitive feeling. Alexander remarks in his "Short History of Philosophy" concerning the approach of Fichte and Schelling: "While subjective idealism only attained a unity at the expense of one of the factors, Schelling only escapes the one-sidedness of Fichte by establishing a formal abstract identity in which the differences are affirmed, but not finally harmonised."²

Schleiermacher's theology, so severely castigated in Hegel's "Philosophy of Religion", recognised the identity of

2. Ibid., p.165.

thought and being - in which all contradictions are solved- but, unlike Schelling, he holds this identity to be an ideal which is never reached cognitively by man. If the union between thought and things, between intellect and the will was to take place, Schleiermacher was convinced that it would be reached through feeling. In feeling, the soul and the universe, man and God, co-mingle and become one.

Hegel, faced with these diverse elements of thought - subject and object, individualism and pantheism, reason and revelation, history and the idea, God the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, which previous philosophers only succeeded in partially reconciling, and that suppressing one of the sides - abolishes these antitheses by conceiving the whole of history as the work of God, and a growing revelation of his nature and purpose. What had been regarded as opposites - mind and matter, spirit and nature, the intelligible and phenomenal world - must be grasped in a unity of thought, and that not in an external way, but by bringing into distinct consciousness the meaning of their differences as necessary elements of reason. By applying

his dialectic, affirming the necessary opposites, Hegel set up a higher synthesis in which truth resides exclusively neither in the subject nor in the object, but in relation and movement subsisting between the two, both sides being affirmed as equally valid moments and, at the same time, reduced to merely relative moments of the one absolute existence of mind. From his vantage point of Absolute Idealism, abstraction, called by Hegel the besetting sin of philosophical, theological and historical thought, could be done away with. The one-sidedness which prevailed in the philosophy of his day could now be seen in a new light - necessary movements of the Spirit that empties itself and returns to itself.

Whatever we may say about the dialectical principle in the hands of Hegel, the method is still one of the most relevant ways to describe the movements of life and history in their tensions, contrasts, and contradictions and in their trend toward more embracing unities. But the question arises: "Is the Hegelian dialectic genuinely dialectical?" We must answer, as Kierkegaard, Tillich and others have done, that it is not: for instead of maintaining the real differences between the thesis and antithesis,

and, for that matter, the co-existence in the one mind of feeling, understanding and Idea (the dynamic synthesis), Hegel abolishes the relative movements and dissolves the contradictions in existence by making them come to a halt in synthesis. "In the last moment, essence triumphs over existence, completion over infinity, and the static over the dynamic... The circle is closed."³ Instead of realising that progress, even in the concept of freedom, brings new problems and tensions, Hegel resolves the antinomies in history. When Hegel made his dialectic of identity and contrast and resolvment in synthesis one of logical necessity, he presupposed that essence and existence and the polarities left by Kant could be resolved on the plane of history. In this singularistic, unitary and organic system, the dialectical no - a Kierkegaardian expression - between the infinite and the finite, between the creative first mind and the creaturely human mind, is suppressed. By breaching the cleavage in thought, Hegel erred in imagining that the dialectic of History would come to a stop with his synthesis. The real, historical estrangement of man from his original unity was concealed in this

3. Tillich, Paul, "Interpretation of History", page 166.

essentialist system. The dialectic failed to recognise the paradoxical relationship between essence and existence. In this failure Hegel eliminates the existential integrity and freedom of the individual and the group in their anxious personal decisions. His mystical apriori, or his awareness of something that transcends the cleavage between subject and object, introduces and substitutes an outside scheme of certain abstract categories for the multiplicity and the rich variety of the actual phenomenon. In principle, ontologists may agree with Hegel's categories, or possibly use his profound re-application of these classifications to interpret reality, but they would insist that his system be supplemented by a sober realism which builds on the foundation of historical facts and which, moreover, takes into consideration man's anxiety in time. The Christian theologian, according to Tillich, "adds to mystical apriori, the criterion of the Christian message."⁴ Its verification, Tillich says, is the "efficacy in the life-process," and the process of verification is itself a process within "the theological circle."⁵

Another problem Hegel encountered at the time of his writing - one which will interest us in

4. Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, Vol.I. p.9.

5. Ibid., p. 102-105.

our appraisal of his relationship to historical Christianity - concerned the controversy between Orthodox interpretation of Christianity and the rationalistic interpretation. The Aufklärung or the spirit of scientific enlightenment and historical criticism delighted in demolishing miracles and laying bare discrepancies in the biblical narrative. The Rationalists criticised the Orthodox manner of basing their beliefs on particular historical phenomena. The progress in Science had consisted in the ever clearer apprehension of the reign of law, as exhibited in instance after instance, and the consequent denial of all breaks in the continuity of natural process by the intrusion into the realm of nature by a supernatural agency. The inviolability of nature, excluded and displaced the emphasis placed on the miraculous and this interpretation further served to convince the Rationalists that no positive value was to be attached to the truths of the historical faith. Hegel believed that the radical and somewhat negative criticism of the Rationalists was justified, in that it provided for

acceptance and promulgation of the christian doctrines apart from the validation of the historical records, but he was convinced that the Rationalist's rejection of the external and circumstantial was no cause for despair or disbelief in the true or Divine content of the message.

On the other hand, the Orthodox, confronted by the Rationalist challenge and destitute of a higher principle to free itself from the literal, historical record, began to lay a disproportionate weight on the external and historical. Hegel says wittingly of the orthodox theologians who allow theology to become solely a study of history and philology, that they are like clerks in a great trading house who keep books and accounts only with regard to the property of others, who only trade for others without having any capital of their own. They receive a salary, it is true, but their office is merely to serve and to register what belongs to other people. "History," Hegel says of the orthodox interpretation, "has to do with truths which were truths, namely for others, not with such as are the property of those who deal with them. But, in philosophy and religion, the great matter is that the

Philosophy of Religion, Vol. I, p. 42-43.

Philosophy of History, p. 25.

spirit itself receive contents, something of its own, and judge itself worthy of the knowledge."⁶ Hegel denies the presupposition on which both Orthodoxy and ordinary rationalism proceed, viz. that the peculiarly Christian doctrine stands or falls with the proveable extra-naturalness of certain facts. In other words, from the vantage point reached by Hegel's Absolute Idea or Notion (Begriff), the Hegelian dialectic can withdraw from the noisy arena occupied by the split between Orthodoxy and Rationalism. Hegel's method of dealing with the Absolute religion does not go to work historically according to the method of the mind which begins at the other side. Rather, he sets out from the Notion.⁷ His metaphysical interpretation of history proposed to bring out and draw into the light of consciousness the ideas, the reason, the order, the design, which are present in the real, and are the inner power that moves it. More will be said in this context when we critically examine Hegel's starting point. Meanwhile, an examination of the method used by Kant and Lessing to rehabilitate by philosophical means the Christian doctrines will throw some light on Hegel's approach.

6. Philosophy of Religion, Vol.I. p.42-43.

7. Philosophy of History, p.25.

Kant, faced with the same cleavage between the Church and the world, between revelation and reason, ethicised the Christian dogmas. While he believed the historical forms of Christianity expressed the pure religion imperfectly with a great admixture of error, he retained the forms, or attempted to retain them, as ladders which had served the childhood of thought. It was his aim to separate the true and eternal content of Christianity from the husk of circumstances in which these truths were first presented to the world. His only canon of interpretation was exclusively ethical, and all questions of the original sense or historical accuracy of the sacred writings are simply left on one side. These forms, because they were contingent, non-rational matter, temporal and local in nature, were destined to pass away. Their value lies in their being vehicles for the ideas of true religion, and, for this reason, they are not to be thoughtlessly attacked. Historical belief while "dead in itself", lends itself to an ethical exegesis, and on this point alone justification may be given to its divine origin. Historical Christianity, or the

particular embodiment of the ethical, is a leading-string to bring us to pure religion and it should be employed with the consciousness that it is nothing more.⁸ Kant's ethical understanding of scripture placed the truths of religion above historical proof. The credentials of Christianity rest on a document preserved ineffaceably in every soul, and therefore no miracles or historical data are required to produce what has become a prototype in human reason. Clearly, Kant's tenuous relationship to historical Christianity and, even more questionable, his corporate Christ, or ideal humanity, severed from, and independent of, its exemplification in one man, cannot be accepted. Despite his efforts to safeguard the hypostation of the ideal humanity in a particular man, his ethical philosophy, though an attempt to reanimate the faith, is separated from the person and particular environment and the preparation for the revelation in Jesus the Christ in the Jewish Community. The truths of Christianity become timeless eternalities which are for all practical purposes divorced from particularity.

8. Kant, Religion within the Limits of
Pure Reason.

Hegel's philosophy of religion - in particular, his views on historical Christianity - was in a large measure dependent on Kant's method of dealing with the Christian message. Instead of ethicising the doctrines, Hegel substitutes the Religion of the Spirit, the Begriff, freed and emancipated from the particular. The Christ - conceived in picturesque imagery by mankind on the plane of "religion still thinking naively" - is, for the Notion, a witness of, or a sign of, the "unity of the Divine and Human already in the thought of man." The relative moment of the self-externalising of the logos is completed and fulfilled in the return of the Spirit to itself. Through the Atonement, fallaciously conceived of in an objective, crude pictorial imagery by the religion of Vorstellung is a necessary moment of the movement of the Absolute through the Other and back to Itself. The historical form is necessary, but the Historical is contingent. It cannot, therefore, form a part of the essential religious content. When the content is eliminated from these outworn forms, it is found to be identical with truth, or with the Begriff.

... a metaphysical principle which, in reference to his previous understanding of the Trinity, has no essential

Though Hegel, like Kant, is concerned to point out the necessity for the concrete exemplification of the Idea; like Kant, pointing to the sensuous concretion of the Idea in one man - on the principle of Hegel's false dialectical method, the sensuous forms are superceded by the last moment in the triadic movement, i.e. thesis moving into antithesis and forming a new synthesis. The final stage abolishes those that dialectically precede it. Instead of the continual co-existence of the two sides, the empirical Jesus who was confessed to be the Christ by the original community and the contemporaneous Christ through the Holy Spirit, both unified in experience of the believer, the contemporaneous or living Christ is independent of, and severed from, the particular sensuous manifestation in history. Though Hegel believes it to be a universal rule that thought must set out from sensuous certainty - from something given and something positive - the given, in this instance, what is pictorially presented and representationally understood by the *Vorstellung*, is dissolved into a metaphysical principle which, in reference to his previous understanding of the Trinity, has no essential

place for the particularisation of Him who was known to be the Christ.

Though there is some question about Hegel's reference to the particular in his all-embracing universal, organic philosophy, let us approach the question from a different perspective.

What within his philosophy obscures the particular history of Christianity, prior even to the emergence of the Absolute Religion? Speaking of the preparation of Christianity in the world, Hegel says not a word on the fact that Christianity issued out of Judaism and cannot, therefore, be understood apart from the historical hope of Judaism. The actual historical genesis of the religion of Universal freedom, according to Hegel, issues directly out of the negation of the free self-consciousness of the peoples. It is certainly true that the age prepared the way for Christianity and was to a large measure the condition of its promulgation and acceptance; but the negative condition is far from affording a positive explanation of Christianity. The fact of Christianity, so one interpreter of Hegel's position is led to say, "loses any ultimate reality." "It contains nothing which

the mind cannot already grasp and is merely an illustration of what the thinker knows already in principle. As Lessing wrote - It is the picture book to the text book of the abstract idea, and the philosopher can know the text without the pictures."⁹ The existence of the God-man, or the uniqueness of Christ is explained from an inner necessity of the religious consciousness at the stage of the religion of redemption. The division between subject and object, between the divine and human consciousness, is reached or cognitively known when the subject reaches within his own being the knowledge of this spirit. The antithesis between subjectivity and objectivity and its necessary removal comes when the subject recognises that the antithesis is in essence removed already in the being of the Absolute Spirit. Granted that the removal of the hostility is a possibility, but does the abolishment of the cleavage depend on Him who was the Christ or upon the cognition of the "three-fold" nature of reality conceived by Hegel to be valid and reconciling prior to Christ's coming?

9. Rust, "The Meaning of History" page 42.

Looking at the particular event - the atonement of God with Man, the abolishment of the one-sided relationship between God and Man, between God and the relative moment, or between God and the instrument of atoning reconciliation - on the basis of Hegel's ideas on the function of the Spiritual Community, it appears that, while the particular introduced the reconciliation into the stream of consciousness, it is no longer binding on the Ecclesia to refer to the particular embodiment of the Idea. The accomplished reconciliation is the basis of the Church: it is taught in the Church's doctrine and the Church is itself the outward expression of the truth. The relation of the subject to the problem of salvation is, therefore, essentially different, according as he is or is not born within the pale of the Christian Community. The Church is, after the conflict and dictomy experienced and conquered in the early community, the society where the virtual conquest over evil is already achieved, and where, therefore, the individual is spared such bitter conflict and outcast wretchedness as preceded the formation of the community.

While this view of the matter represents the essential Christian affirmation of the victorious conquest of "New Being" over "non-Being" (borrowing, for the moment, Tillich's terminology), the Christian Church emphasises the "togetherness", or indissoluble union of the victory and the victor, the community and the Christ, and the Christ and His community. Hegel's view of history and of the reconciling process in the Absolute Religion attempts to do justice to the dual nature and dialectical content of history. Historical research, according to him, must comprehend no less what has happened than the narration of what has happened. He sought to sketch the underlying, the hidden and metaphysical meaning of history which was being neglected by the pragmatic historians, and completely disregarded by the *Auklarung*. But his philosophy of history, and, more particularly, his attempt to do justice to the "event of Jesus Christ" or "events" associated with Jesus, is anti-dialectical. Instead of holding the fact of history, the remembered facts in Christianity, in a dialectical relationship with interpretation, or the received facts in relationship with the witness in the Church, Hegel comes to the facts

with a ready-made dialectical apparatus and sets his puppets in lively action, picking and choosing, discarding and holding the evidence which would contribute to his supposed end, viz. philosophising and allegorising Christian History.

The ambiguity in Hegel's thought and his non-dialectical interpretation of history may be illustrated by some additional references to his interpretation of the spiritual community. He says of the place of sensuous knowledge in the Christian message, the following: "In comparison with this absolute knowledge (deposited in the spiritual community), the sensuous knowledge referred to accordingly takes a secondary place, it is indeed a starting point, a point of departure which has to be gratefully recognised."¹⁰. "Since Spirit starts from what is sensuous, and attains to this lofty estimate of itself, its relation to the sensuous is a directly negative relation. This is a fundamental principle."¹¹. Otherness, externality, finitude, or imperfection, is degraded to the condition of something unessential; the otherness, or Other Being of the Son is a passing, disappearing moment, and not at all a true, essential, permanent and

10. Philosophy of Religion. Vol.III. p.120.

11. Ibid., p.118.

absolute moment.¹² Within the Spiritual Community.. "evil has implicitly and actually been overcome.. The Child, inasmuch as it has been born in the Church, has been born in freedom and to freedom; there no longer exists for it any absolute other-Being, this other Being is considered as something overcome and conquered."¹³

There are two very clear thoughts emerging from the above statements: (1) Hegel confuses the dynamic relationship between the historical manifestation and the eternal and Divine Christ, or ever-present Spirit. The three Persons, supposing that he would allow us this terminology, are really three stages of evolution rather than co-ordinate personalities, of which the third is higher and more real than the other two. We are in sympathy with Hegel's effort to avoid one-sidedness - abstracting one level or one person from the other two - but, when this objectifying process - even in face of his polemic against abstractions - is dissolved, into the third movement of the developmental process, he ignores the paradoxical tension maintained in the Christian Community between itself and the "event". Instead of abolishing the one-sided point of view, Hegel creates another half truth. The Church or Spiritual

12. Ibid., p.123.

13. Ibid., p.119.

Community is the recipient of the absolute idea, and within its life the absolute idea is to be discovered and encountered. But the Community for Hegel is in point of fact the Divine idea embodied in the World. Where the Christian faith acknowledges that the historical Jesus has been interpreted to be the expected Christ in the community, it is not to be overlooked that the fact of his appearance is considered secondary in the philosophy of Hegel and Kant. Instead of the swallowing effect produced by their minimising the event of Jesus, the Christian Church attempts to relate the Jesus of History and the Christ of faith. These inter-related and co-existent thoughts are necessary and valid if the Church is to know itself as judged and forgiven.

More consideration of Hegel's views on *Vorstellung* and *Begriff* will bring out these two criticisms, but, for the present, a brief summary of the state of our argument. Hegel separates his interpretation of the Absolute Religion from the person of Jesus, if you please the Logos externalised in the God-man. Jesus is only an example of the concretion of the Idea that the Human and Divine are one, an Idea which may be realised prior to the advent of the Absolute Religion, Reason, or the Notion, is now freed from the particular. Reason has no

longer to emphasise the occurrence in History of the God-man. Much like Kant, the third movement, or the return of the estranged "Other" to God, has been stamped on the soul of man.

Hegel's absolute third moment, entailing the unity of God and man, confuses the perfect and the imperfect, the creative mind and the creaturely mind. In the process, the infinite and the finite are joined; their contradiction annuled. He has no difficulty showing this union, but, when he explains how the finite became imperfect in the first instance, his logic jumps and falls back on the inevitability of fallenness in order to initiate the return to God and, even, man back to himself.

The religious *Vorstellung*, feeling, intuition, and pictorial representation of the object of religion, is the primary example of what Hegel condemns as abstraction, objectification of the process. *Vorstellung*, ambiguously represented in Hegel's thought, performs, on the one hand, the task of introducing the idea into the historical consciousness, representing the idea as concretely exemplified.- While, on the other hand, philosophy justifies the thinking of the

religious consciousness. In faith, the true content has become a "certainty", but there is still wanting to it the form of thought. All the forms, such as feeling, popular ideas, and reflection, may certainly have the form of truth, but they themselves are not the true form which makes the true content necessary. "Thought", according to Hegel, "is the absolute judge before which the content must verify and attest its claims."¹⁴ In the following paragraph he represents the secondary task of philosophy: "It is not the concern of Philosophy to produce Religion in any individual. Its existence is, on the contrary, presupposed as forming what is fundamental in everyone. So far as man's essential nature is concerned, nothing new is to be introduced into him. To try to do this would be as absurd as to give a dog painted writings to chew, under the idea that in this way you could put mind into it. He who has not extended his spiritual interests beyond the hurry and bustle of this finite world, nor succeeded in lifting himself above this life through aspiration, through the anticipation, through the feeling of the Eternal, and who has not yet gazed upon the pure ether

14. Philosophy of Religion, Vol.III. p.148.

of the soul, does not possess in himself that element which it is our object here to comprehend."¹⁵
 In this respect it is the *Vorstellung* which must act as the guide and as the ground-breaker to the thoughtful, creative discipline of philosophy. The *Vorstellung* is important, in so far as it opens up new grounds and conceives the Eternal idea made concrete. The justification of philosophy supervening upon these naive categories lies in the necessity for a coherent system of Church doctrines. It is only principles or beliefs that can be held in common. Feeling, as such, is purely subjective and can afford no bond of union. It is of the utmost importance, according to Hegel, that religion like philosophy be founded upon a substantial objective content of truth.

There is, however, another and very different side to Hegel's thought about the relationship of philosophy to religion, and it is a side which exercises an influence on his general outlook which is incommensurate with the extent to which he allows himself to give expression to it. John Baillie comments on this in the following manner in his "Interpretation of Religion". "For it is difficult to escape the impression that it is from philosophy rather than from religion that Hegel himself prefers to

15. Ibid., Vol. I. p. 4.

draw his own spiritual nourishment."¹⁶ Is this criticism valid? Yes, if one is careful to recognise the ambiguity in Hegel's views. Substantiating this point one may refer to the considerable transformation that the doctrines of Christianity undergo in Hegel's "philosophic rehabilitation" of the faith. Religion is the truth for all; it is the truth for the heart, calculated to affect the feelings and the moral will. It is, as Hegel says, "reason thinking naively." It has got hold of vital and eternal principles; but the form which it presents them in, while best suited to its own purpose, is not adequate to the principles themselves. It creates feeling and contingent facts as necessary and constitutive and integral elements in its interpretation. While philosophy, freed by the Notion, comprehends the absolute Idea, in and of itself. The frame, in this instance the historical manner of understanding the faith, does not stand on the same level as the work of art that it encloses. While the *Vorstellung* may have been a vehicle, a mere stimulus of such and such truths, when this mode of representing things is stripped of these truths- and Philosophy is able to perform this process on the basis of its understanding of the movements

16. John Baillie, "Interpretation of Religion"

of the Eternal Idea - Vorstellung loses its religious bearing. It is eternal principles or truths which are necessary for the ming of pure reason. Speaking of philosophy and its relationship to feeling and pictorial thought, Hegel says.. "feeling is then not rejected by philosophy; on the contrary, it simply gets through philosophy its true content."¹⁷. That is to say, it may not be rejected, but this is not to deny that it has been superceded by philosophical analysis. Philosophical thinking places itself in opposition to the concrete and carries through the opposition until it reaches a reconciliation between the two. "This reconciliation", according to Hegel, "is philosophy; so far as philosophy is theology, it sets forth the reconciliation of God with Himself and with Nature, and shows that nature, other-being, is Divine, that it partly belongs to the very nature of finite spirit to rise into the state of reconciliation and that it partly reaches the state of reconciliation in the history of the world.. This religious knowledge thus reached through the nature, and in possession of the spiritual community passes through three stages or

17. Philosophy of Religion, Vol.III. p.149.

positions.. The first position is that of immediate naive religion and faith; the second, the position of the understanding, of the so-called cultured reflection and enlightenment; and finally, the third position, the stage of philosophy."¹⁸. Again Hegel's false dialectical method comes in view. Instead of holding the preceding stages in tension with the completed idea, the stages are virtually abolished and the synthesis, because it has no need of the external and outward to verify or establish it, can dispense with the inaccurate and unspiritual emphasis of the Vorstellung; for the latter stood in need of supplementation and revision and verification on the part of Philosophy.

Philosophy not only supplants the religious naivete and gives to religion a certain rationality, and that particularly to the Rationalists who delighted in deprecating the element of reason in the Absolute Religion, but Dialectical philosophy begins with the proposition that God is essentially triadic in nature. The idea comes outside of Himself, posits Himself as the Other and returns to Himself. This positing of Himself in an Other

18. Philosophy of Religion, Vol.III. p.149.

Being is a necessary movement wherein He Knows Himself. "Without the World, God would not be God." With the complex trinitarian movements, apriori conceived, the absolute religion, because it emphasises the point of return in the death of Christ, could be used as a necessary vehicle for the elaboration of the synthesis reached at the level of Spirit. The Absolute Religion, because Philosophy knows the content of the Idea, can be authenticated through philosophy. "This standpoint (the Notion, or Begriff) consequently supplies us with the justification of religion, and, in particular, of the Christian or true religion. It knows the content in accordance with its necessity, in accordance with its reasons, and so, too, it knows the forms also in the development of this content."¹⁹ Hegel writes in another context: "Subjectivity develops the content out of itself, but does this in accordance with necessity - knows and recognises the content to be necessary and that it is objective, that it has an essential existence of its own, is in and for itself. This is the standpoint of Philosophy, according to which the content takes refuge in the Notion and, by means of thought, gets

19. Ibid., Vol.III. p.146.

its restoration and justification."²⁰. On the basis of Hegel's trinitarian ideas, it is necessary that the Reason or Notion posit itself as an Other to itself and, in recognising the Other, return to itself, or "die to itself". This complex scheme by which God receives justification in history, ties itself uniquely to the Christian revelation and, in the cyclical process, devised already, the empirical or particular Other is nullified in the process of the Other returning to Itself. With these thoughts in mind, the Begriff - the completed Notion - can pick and choose from the Vorstellung to establish its acceptance and, in the process, identify itself with the sacred dogmas. "It was to Christ only that the Idea, when it was ripe, and the time fulfilled, could attach itself, and in him only could it see itself realised."²¹. "But the history of Christ is a history for the Spiritual Community, since it is absolutely adequate to the Idea..This is what must be regarded as the essential thing, this is the verification, the absolute proof; this is what is to be understood by the witness of the Spirit; it is the Spirit, the indwelling Idea which attests Christ's mission, and, for

20. Philosophy of Religion, Vol.III. p.145.

21. Ibid., Vol.III. p.113.

those who believed, and for us who are in possession of the Notion, in its developed form, this is the verification."²².

Speaking of the practice of verifying the truth of the Absolute Religion that refers to the sensuous element in the appearance of Christ, Hegel makes it plain that the "outward" has been transcended..."The verification of Spirit cannot be simply asserted as if its truth was contained in such narratives regarding one who was represented as a Historical person and in a Historical fashion..This truth, however, is pure and certain by itself, although it has an historical starting point,"²³.

Elaborating further on the manifestation of the Other in History, Hegel asks the question and offers his answers...."Is such a manifestation true in and for itself? It is, because God as Spirit is the triune God. He is this act of manifestation, this self-objectifying, and it is His nature to be identical with Himself while thus making Himself objective; He is eternal love. This objectifying, as seen in its completely developed form in which it resolves the two extremes of the universality of God and finitude or death, and this return

22. Ibid., p.113.

23. Ibid., p.110.

into self, is the act of abolishing the rigidity of the antithesis; is love in the infinite sorrow which is at the same time assuaged in it. This absolute truth, this truth in and for itself that God is not an abstraction, but something concrete, is unfolded by philosophy."²⁴.

Clarifying his view on what is accomplished in the reconciliation, Hegel augments his presuppositions on the matter when he writes... "That God has shown Himself to be by His very nature reconciled with the world, that what is human is not something alien to His nature, but that this otherness, this self-differentiation, finitude, as it is sometimes expressed, is a moment in God Himself, though to be sure, it is a vanishing moment; still, he has in this moment revealed and shown Himself to the Church."²⁵.

The mind posits or presupposes the unity of the divine and human. Thought presupposes that God in his true Notion is the life process; the trinity in which the universal puts itself into antithesis with itself and is in this antithesis identical with itself. "Faith simply lays hold of the thought and has the consciousness that in Christ this absolute essential truth is perceived in the process

24. Ibid., p.99.

25. Ibid., p.99.

of its development, and that is through Him that this truth has first been revealed."²⁶.

From these quotations the second point made concerning the subservience of religion to Philosophy has been amply illustrated. Philosophy knows the content of the Notion, its necessary movements, and the Absolute Religion merely illustrates the moments of the Notion fulfilling itself, and returning to itself. It is to be remembered that Hegel's ideas on this subject are ambiguously stated and that this ambiguity gave rise to similar confusion and division in the Post-Hegelian reactions.

Following this train of thought a bit further, Hegel's views on the traditional doctrines in the Christian faith may be briefly summarised. The atonement is an exhibition only of one great rhythm of thought - the oneness of God and man. The death of Christ, reconciled the Absolute Being with Himself, and this act of death is Christ's resurrection as Spirit. It does not represent the whole of the matter to speak of the atonement as occurring at a particular time and happening to a particular individual. The truth is that this one person means all men,

26. Ibid., p.87.

and this once means always, but it does at first sight appear as an empirical fact that happened to one man and no more and belongs to a past which is no longer here. The right relation of the subject to the truth of the atonement, if Hegel's thought is being interpreted correctly, is that it (man) should itself "come to the same conscious unity, should deem it good for itself, produce it in itself, and be filled with the divine spirit. This is pure self-consciousness that knows and wills the truth, is the divine spirit in it."²⁷.

If this thought is Hegel's, and, from our exploration of his philosophy, it is surely an implication, then it may follow that the kernel of Christianity is not the Historic incarnation, but the general truth of the Incarnation; the Union of God and man, the truth that In God we live and move and have our being, that truth which human consciousness may represent or does represent, in the movements of the Absolute Spirit.

Dorner makes a point in his work on the "Person of Christ" in connection with the Hegelian scheme which bears repeating. Dorner points out that the rhythmic process of the Divine life (constantly enters into limitation

27. Ibid., p.150.

or finitude, and constantly returns out of it again into itself, or restores itself to identity of form) precludes the adequate realisation of God's essence in any finite being. Since the finite has momentary being, it is clear that no place remains for a God-man in whom fullness of the Idea should take up its abode. Moreover, God would cease to be a living God if the Idea should in any way attain absolute realisation, whether in an individual or in the whole. The inadequacy of the form to its content solicits the process ever afresh. If Christ should be conceived as the perfect God-man, history would come to a termination with him. At the very most, Christ could only have formed the beginning of a higher stage in the process of the Divine self-consciousness, beyond which, however, the following stages would be destined to advance.²⁸

On the basis of Dorner's critique, it would appear that the triadic movement actually debunks and depreciates the finite and, furthermore, the supposed synthesis reached in the absolute Religion actually runs counter to the entire system; for we are led to believe that God becomes a subject in the endless series or totality of finite spirits. The

28. Dorner, T.A., History of the Development of the Doctrine of The Person of Christ, Vol.III. page 148.

world exists merely to mediate God's own self-consciousness. According to the Hegelian system, all men participate in God-manhood in such a manner that a Christology is incompatible therewith. The universal God-manhood, or incarnation taught by Hegel, is neither derived nor derivable from Christ; it necessarily robs Him of his specific position, and puts all men on essentially the same level with Him.²⁹

An evaluation by Nicolas Berdyaev may serve to expound the criticism made that the Hegelian system swallows the finite. He says in "The Divine and The Human" - "In German metaphysics of the beginning of the nineteenth century, everything is on a razor edge and may be toppled over on to one or other of opposite sides. The philosophy of Hegel, which was its crowning manifestation, may be interpreted either as the final engulfing of the divine by the human and as an expression of the pride of man, or as the final engulfing of the human by the divine and as the denial of human personality. Both interpretations of Hegel are possible....Hegel, and, in part, Schelling, teach the becoming of God. The world process is the becoming of God; in man God finally becomes conscious. Both a deification of man and a repudiation of man

29. Ibid., p.148.

30. Ibid., page 151.

take place. There is nothing which is purely human, distinguished from the divine and standing before God in a drama which is being played out."30. The Divine self-consciousness is, on the basis of our understanding of Hegel, in bondage to humanity. God is subjected to the conditions of time and to the process of gradualness, finding his adequate revelation in the totality of finite forms. Dorner's further word on the subject should be noted: He says - "If God does not gradually arrive at self-knowledge through the process of humanity (as it itself slowly arrives at knowledge) then, does Hegel teach or recognise a God above and outside of this process of humanity? On the contrary, it considers it to be its greatest honour to have overcome this view of the world. If God were self-consciousness in eternal absoluteness, and if, consequently, He Himself were eternally His own other (sien andern), what ground would this system have for representing God as opening Himself to a world in which distinctions are taken seriously, and to a process of the world which is to overcome this veritable distinction."31.

We may remark at this point that, while the

30. Berdyaev, Nicholas, "The Divine and the Human" page 30-31.

31. Dorner, page 151.

view of God as standing out of the world entirely up to the point of his supernatural entrance in his Son makes the revelation of God something foreign to the consciousness and life of man; then the opposite view, which descends into the depths of human nature to discover in it a God-related element, errs in making the Incarnation of the Son, even God Himself, too immanent. Either way of comprehending the act of God in Christ avoids the paradoxical union of God and the world. When the problem of the relation between God and the world is solved by converting the whole of philosophy and theology into christology - by treating the entire world as the Son of God - the dialectical relationship between God and His world (creation) is obscured. A Christology of the "Divine Humanity" is the natural outcome of such a step. David Frederick Strauss, whose views will be discussed in a moment, understood the particular incarnation in this vein. He says: "This individual (Jesus Christ), by His personality and His fates, became the occasion of raising the truth that humanity is the God-man to universal consciousness."³²

32. Ibid., p.293.

Returning for a moment to consider Hegel's views on the Evangelical history, we may say that his views fluctuated - and this is nowhere more evident than in his disciples. Some of them held that this history entire, and others that this history in part, is tenable in conjunction with the philosophy of History. David Frederick Strauss, whom we shall discuss in more detail in our next chapter, said in this connection: "The question which can be decided from the standpoint of the Philosophy of Religion is not whether what is narrated in the Gospel actually happened or not, but whether in view of the truth of certain conceptions it must necessarily have happened. And in regard to this, what I assert is, that from the general system of the Hegelian Philosophy it by no means necessarily follows that such an event must have happened, but that from the standpoint of the system, the truth of that from which actually the conception arose is reduced to a matter of indifference; it may have happened, but it may equally as well not have happened. And the task of deciding on this point may be calmly handed over to historical criticism."³³

33. Schweitzer, Albert, "The Quest of the Historical Jesus." Page 115.

Hegel's authority may be appealed to by those who believe not only in an Incarnation of God in a general sense, but also the manifestation of God in flesh as taking place in one man (Jesus) at a definite time and place. From the a priori necessity of the Idea (going outside of itself and returning to itself) the incarnation, whether individually or generally, must have taken place. Strauss' ambiguous interpretation of Hegel in this instance is significant for its portrayal of the real, though unsolved, problem in Hegel's thought. It is not clear, according to Strauss, "Whether the evangelical fact as such, not indeed in its isolation, but together with the whole series of manifestations of the idea (of God-manhood) in the history of the world, is the truth; or whether the embodiment of the idea in that single fact is only a formula of which consciousness makes use in forming its concept."³⁴

To the question whether, and, if so, how far, the evangelical history can be held in conjunction with the Idea (the fundamental Notion of the Hegelian School) of the identity of the Divine and the human nature, three

34. Ibid., p.114.

answers are possible: either the existence of the history is compatible with Philosophy, or merely part of it, or that neither in part nor at all can the history be retained as history. The Hegelian school, as we shall presently witness, was divided into three divisions, according to these three answers. (1) The right side, represented by Marheineke and Goschel, Gabler, Ganz, Herring and Schaller, emphasises the positive side of the master's religious philosophy, implying that in Jesus the idea of God-manhood was perfectly fulfilled and, in a certain sense, intelligibly realised. These men believed that Hegel's emphasis on the creative insight of religion and the philosophical dependence on this insight, supported and preserved the tenets of revealed religion. (2) The moderates, or centrum, or middle party reaction, while not professing to be thorough-going disciples of Hegel, applied the main principles of the system to the various sciences, particularly to Christian dogmas and to history. The representatives of this school, according to Alexander, "contended manfully against the materialism of the age for a spiritualistic interpretation of the world,"³⁵ and they found Hegel's ideas helpful. (3) The

35. Alexander, History of Philosophy, p.351.

left or extreme reaction, represented in the thought of Feubach, Strauss, Bauer and, later, Croce, isolated arguments in support of a negative interpretation of Christianity. This school, on the basis of Hegel's dialectic and his distinction between *Vorstellung* and *Begriff*, believed the latter to triumph over the former and to lead the way for the rejection of the concrete, pictorial *Vorstellung*. At a later period in Strauss' interpretation of Jesus, he writes in his "Popular Life for the German People" and his "Streitschriften" - "Christ is described as 'a religious genius, who, owing to the peculiarity of his constitution, or to His moral vigour, may possibly have worked some of the miracles of healing; and, although he is not in all respects the accomplished reality of the Idea, but merely as regards religion, in religious matters it is impossible to transcend the highest goal thereof, to wit, that a man should know himself in his immediate consciousness to be one with God.'"³⁶ Commenting on the two major reactions, the left and right, Croce says..."It would be impossible to decide which of the two interpretations was the more faithful to the thought of Hegel; for both of them were founded upon Hegelian doctrines, and were

36. Quoted by Dorner, "Person of Christ" Vol.III.
page 292.

opposed and hostile to one another, precisely because those doctrines were contradictory."³⁷.

John Bailie writes: "The left wing's insistence upon the popular and pictorial character of religious thinking soon led to the facile identification of dogma with mythology, and so to the virtual dismissal of religion from the philosopher's spiritual stock and trade."³⁸.

But the right wing, so Bailie believes, was also one-sided. "The right wing's indiscriminate acceptance of the whole religious tradition blurred the distinction between what is vital and what is merely secondary and incidental; between the living and the outworn...Often there has been as much fundamental religious scepticism behind the indiscriminate conversation of the right as behind the more subversive illusionism of the left."³⁹.

We shall be concerned in the next chapter with the leftist reaction as represented in the writings of David Frederick Strauss.

Meanwhile, some brief summary of the main points arising out of Hegel's own interpretation may suffice to make us aware of the central issue

37. Croce, "What is Living and what is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel" page 202, quoted by Bailie, John, "Interpretation of Religion" page 197.

38. Bailie, "Interpretation of Religion", p.200.

39. Ibid., p.200.

at stake. (1) The Vorstellung, or pictorial representation is a transitional stage to the absolute idea. Though this stage seems necessary if the truth was to be brought home to everyday humanity. The leftist group isolate the relative value of the Vorstellung and, as a consequence, they are led to emphasise the fictional, mythological and relatively unimportant part exercised by the pictorial in the necessary realisation of the Absolute Idea. In this emphasis, Christ represents "Humanity" united to God through dying, rising and ascending to Heaven. This emphasis, particularly in Feurbach and the later Straussian writings (1866 "Leben Jesus", and other writings) gave rise to the thought of making God's spirit only in finite spirit, while in Himself He is not spirit but a merely physical principle. God, the Absolute Spirit, appears to be no more than the result attained by the finite spirit. (2) On the other hand, Hegel's emphasis on the pictorial and concrete particularised incarnation of the God-man in the Christ, gave rise to the view that the unity of the Divine and human natures has been brought into human consciousness

through the Christ, and, moreover, this union is a certainty through the death of the God-man.

If the Hegelian dialectic can be understood as progressing to the Absolute Spirit, and, at the same time, correlating the thesis, antithesis in a dynamic synthesis which does not abolish, nor extinguish the thesis and antithesis, then the Orthodox Hegelians have understood Hegel's religious philosophy. But, as we have been careful to point out, on the basis of Hegel's anti-dialectical scheme, (the latter stages transcending and superseding the former), the concrete, in this instance the object of the Absolute Religion, the person that unified withing Himself and the Cosmos the divine and human, is swallowed in the synthesis, (the Absolute returning to Himself out of a state of estrangement). The co-temporarity of the Absolute Idea, (a favourite way Hegel uses of referring to the realised Idea), seems to be independent of the "fact" that Jesus was confessed to be the Christ by the original community. Though the "facts" of sacred history are "remembered facts", (John Knox's phrase), Hegel annihilates the dialectical relationship which must exist between the

Church and the "original witnessing community." This fact is clearly presentable in his view of the spiritual community. In the last analysis, this interpreter of Hegel would accuse him of a form of docetism and monophysitism. That is, the God-man, the particular self-manifestation of God is only an appearance, a phantom which the Church can dispense with as long as it recognises that the idea has three essential, necessary movements. It is our final judgment that the Hegelian system cannot have a place for a legitimate Christology. The Universal God-manhood, or incarnation taught by him, is neither derived nor derivable from Christ; it necessarily robs Him of his specific position, and puts all men on essentially the same level with Him. God really denotes the essence of humanity, and everyone, apart from the mediatorial function of the Christ, is redeemed by bringing his essence to development, or, more precisely expressed, by bringing it to consciousness.

1. Introduction: Strauss' Interpretative Key.

The contemporary "entmythologisierung" controversy assumes that there is myth to be interpreted in the New Testament and that, unless this myth is explained, the Gospel cannot be effectively communicated in our modern age. The latter of these assumptions, Strauss maintained, must govern any interpretation of the Gospel, but the former, the existence of myth in the Bible, particularly in the New Testament, had to be proven. However the current school of demythologizing defines myth, and whatever may be our reservations as to the application of their methods to the history of the New Testament, the recognition of the existence of this literary form in the New Testament finds its origin in general in the early decades of the 19th Century and, in particular, in the expanded application given this interpretative key in Strauss' "Leben Jesus".

Other theologians had applied the mythical key before Strauss, and he freely admits that his critique is not novel; but his predecessors and contemporaries had not consistently carried forth this thesis. They had been content to stop with the Old Testament and, if they advanced to the New Testament, only the infancy and ascension-resurrection narratives came under their purview. Strauss' contribution to the discussion, which

will be examined in detail, was to bring together into one result the material which his countrymen had for a half century before been accumulating in order to invalidate or seriously question the pretension of the Gospel narratives to be taken as genuine history. The way had been prepared for this hermetical method advanced in his critique by Lowth, Heyne, Eichorn and Gabler, but none of these men had the courage, or the transcendence, so Strauss informs us in the preface to his 1st. edition of his life of Jesus, to utilise to the fullest extent and apply in any thorough-going manner, the tool which he maintained would annihilate the irreconcilable impasse created in biblical interpretation by the supernaturalists and rationalists. Only a treatise written by one emancipated from certain religious and dogmatical presuppositions which had hindered research in the past, and only one who realised before embarking on such an investigation, that the essential gospel affirmations remained inviolate, despite his criticisms, could apologise for the faith in the courts of science and philosophy. The author believed himself eminently qualified for such a task. Though others could execute such a work with incomparably superior erudition, they did not, or could not, separate themselves from their outmoded presuppositions.

But Strauss, with coolness and detachment, born out of his philosophical studies, more particularly in the fires of Hegelian philosophy - though this predisposition is nowhere acknowledged, however evidential it may be in his writing, and especially in his Christological reconstruction - Strauss could arbitrate between the opposing schools and present an interpretation of the Gospel purporting to be freed from the world view implied in the two camps.

Strauss' question in 1835, when his first life of Jesus was published, and in 1864, when he wrote the Life of Jesus for the German People, was: "Is the Gospel history true or reliable as a whole, and its details, or is it not?"¹ On the basis of what we know of history, science, and philosophy, and, in particular, the character of God, what is true and valid for all time, and what depending on casual and temporary circumstances, had now become useless or pernicious.

Strauss' question and his answer caused considerable consternation among the two schools of biblical criticisms which had assumed that all, or at least in part, when the history was stripped of its miraculous embellishments, the content of the Gospels possessed historical validity. His task, as he saw it, was to invalidate the two out-standing

1. "Life of Jesus For The German People" p.XI, 1864.

interpretations before he could advance his own. The supernaturalists, represented primarily by Olhausen, but in some degree drawing sympathisers from the rationalists and the middle of the road of eclectic mythicists, as Strauss called them, assumed the history to be factually and objectively true. The miracles and the events which carried them were both true history. The rationalists, on the other hand, dissatisfied with the philosophy of history implied in the former's presentation, and offended by the acceptance of miracles as historical fact, advanced an interpretation purporting to free the events from their supernatural trappings. These embellishments and miraculous interventions in a world free from interpositions were only draperies which need only to be drawn aside in order to disclose the pure historic form. While the supernaturalists offended the discoveries of science, the rationalists mutilated and defaced the affirmations of faith. On this basis - that is, on the terms which faith and science require - each view was untenable. Scientific theology, instead of turning back from rationalism to supernaturalism or from supernaturalism to rationalism, must move straight onward between the two and search out a new path for itself. In accordance with the philosophical method which Strauss utilises, but in no place admits to be

the rationale of his mythicising process, he sets up a dialectical pattern - the thesis represented by supernaturalistic explanation with an antithesis represented by the rationalistic explanation, resolved into a synthesis by the mediating solution, vis-à-vis, the mythological interpretation. The Hegelian dialectic, as we shall note when we discuss the specific incidents in the life of Jesus, determines the method of the work. Each event in the life of Jesus is considered separately, first as supernaturally explained, then as rationalistically explained, and the one explanation is so refuted by the other. "By this means," remarks Strauss in his preface, "the incidental advantage is secured that the work is fitted to serve as a repertory of the leading views and discussions of all parts of Gospel history."

Before illustrating this process, his introductory section discussing the development of the mythical point of view in relation to the Gospel histories should receive some attention. His survey of the attempted reconciliations between Gospel history, between the assumed immediate manifestations of the divine in history, and the mediate knowledge of the divine in modern culture through the finite casual nexus, points up the solution, or at least paves the way for a solution which Strauss offers

as a conciliatory measure in the body of the work.
 The problem which Strauss posed in his book, and,
 for that matter, the central aim of his work,
 besides invalidating the supernaturalist and
 purely rationalist positions, may be noted in the
 following quotation from his introductory section.
 He says in the section, "The application of the
 mythus too circumscribed," referring to the half-
 way position occupied by the current mythicists....
 (For them) "the entrance to the Gospel history
 was through the decorated portal of mythus and
 the exit was similar to it, whilst the inter-
 mediate space was still traversed by the crooked
 and toilsome paths of natural interpretation."²
 The two extremities had been cut off by the
 pruning knife of criticism, while the essential
 halo of the history, the period from the
 baptism to the resurrection, remained as yet
 unassailed. He was convinced that the middle
 way, between the historical and mythical, chosen
 by the mythicists who used the historical mythus
 as a means of relapsing into the inconsistencies
 common to the naturalists and rationalist
 interpretation, was a misrepresentation of the
 mythical position. They retained some of the
 events as historical and designated others as

2. "Life of Jesus" p. 45.

Before addressing ourselves to the historical story in mythical, and this rather arbitrarily. Strauss believed this inconsistency was due to a misunderstanding and failure on their part to clearly apprehend the claims set out in the mythical interpretation. His aim, or what he proposed for himself in his work is stated in the section, "The mythical view not clearly apprehended." Speaking of himself: "This writer applies the nature of themythus to the entire history. He recognises mythi or mythical embellishments in every section, and ranges under the category of mythi not merely the miraculous occurrences during the infancy of Jesus, but those also of his public life; not merely miracles operated on Jesus, but those wrought by him."³ "We have to realise," he says in his preface, "that the narratores testify sometimes, not to outward facts, but to ideas, often most poetical, and beautiful ideas, constructions which even eyewitnesses had unconsciously put upon facts, imagination concerning them, reflection upon them, reflections and imaginings such as were natural to the time and at the author's level of culture. What we have here is not falsehood, not misrepresentation of the truth. It is a plastic, naive, and, at the same time, often most profound apprehension of truth, within the area of religious feeling and poetic insight. It results in narrative, legendary, mythical in nature, illustrative often of spiritual truth in a manner more perfect than any hard prosaic statement could achieve."⁴

3. "Leben Jesus" Section II

4. Religious Development from Kant. p.114.

Before addressing ourselves to the inconsistency in the mythical school which Strauss sought to clear up, the last statement points us to a definition of myth. Considering the great importance which the idea of myth possesses in Strauss' work, it is indeed striking that the author has nowhere entered into a connected investigation of this idea, and especially into a more definite settlement of the conditions under which alone a myth can originate. He infers that myth is a process, a developmental scheme to account for the rise and progress, the character and influences on Christianity. In the life of Jesus for the German People he says: "My fundamental notion in regard to the unhistorical element in the Gospels has been that of the myth, by which I understand, investitures, resembling history of original Christian ideas, fashioned in the legend which unconsciously invented them".⁵ These legends, or the legendary transformation of the real life of Jesus arose chiefly from the practical feelings and wants of the people and on this account formed according to the free play of the imagination. But myth, contrary to the rationalist position, is not so much the product of conscious invention, as the result of a pronounced inclination to the pictorial. This type of representational thinking is the form to which the human mind naturally resorts at the stage where it inevitably finds the difficulty of resting in the conceptual world. In other words, mythicising is the child-like faculty of putting things, which the juvenile mind is incapable of stating in a scientific fashion, in a concrete and pictorial form. "We rate as

5. "Life of Jesus for the German People" Vol.I. p.142.

Gospel myths any narrative, related directly or indirectly to Jesus, which is not, and in so far as it is not, to be accounted an expression of fact, but a precipitate of an idea of his earliest disciples." 6.

Strauss' classification of mythi and his criteria for distinguishing between the various mythi will be discussed in a later section; but now a glance at his definition of religion may prepare the way for the implicit presuppositions of our author. "If religion be defined as the perception of truth, not in the form of an idea, which is the philosophic perception, but invested with imagery; it is easy to see that the mythical element can be wanting only when religion either falls short of, or goes beyond, its particular province, and that in the proper religious sphere it must necessarily exist." 7. Religion, it appears on the basis of this definition, is a bodying forth in the semblance of historical form, the essential truths which in philosophy coincide with the actual. This is possible for philosophy..."because for this discipline," Strauss remarks further, "the thought of God is comprehended to be his essence, and in the regular course itself of nature and of history, the revelation of the divine idea is acknowledged." 8.

6. Thornburn, T.J. "Jesus the Christ, Historical or Mythical" p.7.

7. "Life of Jesus" p.80.

8. Ibid., p.80.

From this understanding of religion, it may be inferred that the author was more concerned with the working out the Hegelian principles - the differences between *Vorstellung* and *Begriff*, - pictorial, representational thining and conceptual cognition - on historical grounds, narrowing the ideas that the master had made large and indefinite, defining what he had left undefined, than he was in attaching any independent meaning to myth, or giving any positive significance to this literary form. His religious ideas presuppose a metaphysic, one that vitally affects his view of the nature of God, his activity in the world and the possible reconciliation which may be effected between the discoveries of Science and the affirmations of faith. These metaphysical presuppositions will be elaborated in connection with the section termed by Strauss, "Dogmatic import of the life of Jesus;" meanwhile, in fairness to the author, the development of the mythical key will be discussed. It is in this section that Strauss outlines the problems concerning the mythical interpretation and the reticence of the writers in the field to apply the interpretative form to the New Testament. Within this section, Strauss' manner of rectifying the limited and inherent betrayal of the mythus is set forth in some detail.

11. The development of the mythical interpretation:

A. Philosophy of History.

The rationalists, the mythicists, and to some extent the allegorists - but not as decidedly as the other interpretators, - shared the same interpretation of history. An account in the Gospel history is declared

unhistorical, when to use the words of Strauss, "the narrative is irreconcilable with the known and universal laws which govern the course of events. Now according to the laws agreeing with all just philosophical conceptions and all credible experience, the absolute cause never disturbs the chain of secondary causes by single arbitrary acts of interposition, but rather manifests itself in the production of the aggregate of finite causalities, and of their reciprocal action. When, therefore, we meet with an account of certain phenomena or events of which it is either expressly stated or implied that they were produced immediately by God himself (divine apparitions - voices from heaven and the like), or by human beings possessed of supernatural powers (miracles, prophecies), such an account is in so far to be considered as not historical. And, inasmuch as, in general, the intermingling of the spiritual world with the human is found only in unauthentic records, and is irreconcilable with all just conceptions; so narratives of angels and of devils, of their appearing in human shape and interfering with human concerns, cannot possibly be reconciled as historical.

Another law of history, overlooked by the ecclesiastic mythicists in their preference for establishing the historical fact, concerns the law of succession. All occurrences, not excepting the most violent convulsions and the most rapid changes, follow in certain order of sequence of increase and decrease. If, therefore, we are told of a celebrated individual that he attracted already at his birth and during his childhood that

attention which he elicited (excited) in his manhood; that his followers at a single glance recognized him as being all that he actually was; if the transition from the deepest despondency to the most ardent enthusiasm after his death is represented as the work of a single hour: we must feel more than doubtful whether it is a real history which lies before us. If psychological laws otherwise quite usual to us are absolutely broken, the historicity of the record is open to grave suspicion. To be regarded as historically valid, a narrative must neither be inconsistent with itself nor in contradiction with other accounts. Another point implicit in the anti-supernaturalism shared by the naturalists, rationalists and mythicists, is given succinct formulation by Strauss. Explaining the rise of the unhistorical point of view which one meets in the sacred writings, he says: "In the ancient world - that is, in the east - the religious tendency was so preponderating, and the knowledge of nature so limited, that the law of connection between earthly and finite beings was very loosely regarded. At every link there was a disposition to spring into the infinite, and to see God as the immediate cause of every change in nature or the human mind. In this mental condition the biblical history was written. Not that God is here represented as doing all and everything himself - a notion which, from the manifold direct evidence of the fundamental connection between finite things, would be impossible to any reasonable mind: but there prevails in the biblical writers a ready disposition to derive all things down to the minutest details, as soon as they appear particularly important immediately from God. He it is who gives the rain and sunshine; he sends the east wind and the storm; he dispenses war,

famine, pestilence; he hardens hearts and softens them, suggests thoughts and resolutions. And this is particularly the case with regard to his chosen intrustments and beloved people. In the history of the Israelites we find traces of his immediate agency at every step: Through Moses, Elias, Jesus, he performs things which never would have happened in the ordinary course of nature."⁹

So far the rationalists and the mythicists can agree on the basis of their common conviction, that all things are linked together by a chain of causes and effects, which suffers no interruption. Even the naturalists and the deists can agree to this view of history, with the exception that for them the stories were attributed to ignorance and imposture. With this view of History, the supernaturalist position has been ruled out of court before her case has been presented. Though the Allegorists, that is the earliest interpreters, did not completely share this view of history, they did, so Strauss contends, by their relinquishment of historical reality, the corporeal and literal for the spiritual in order to preserve to them an absolute inherent truth, approximate the mythical point of view. While the Allegorists maintained the author of sacred scripture to relate in historical semblance a higher inspiration received from a divine agency, the mythical view similarly convinced that the inner signification of the events was clothed in historical semblance, derived the inspiration from the natural process where the legend originated and developed in the spirit of a community.

The Christian and Hebrew allegorists, offended by the sensible, humanising anthropomorphic traits ascribed to the deity and endeavouring to penetrate to the aim of the author of the narrative in question prepared the way for the rejection of the literal accuracy of the records. But the allegorists, due to their supernaturalist bias, their fear of offending the faithful and their lack of critical tools, could not embark on the radical criticisms of the narratives proffered by the naturalists, rationalists and the Mythicists. The question is now, in view of the philosophy of History, the rise of the mythical point of view through the naturalist and rationalists and Strauss' quarrel with the mythicist school of thought.

B. RISE OF THE MYTHICAL VIEW.

The evolution of the mythical position through the naturalistic and rationalistic criticism of scripture and the freedom given to biblical interpretation by these schools can best be illustrated by the reaction to and elaboration of these ideas in the mythical interpretation. Because the findings of the rationalists and naturalists were felt to jeopardise the essential affirmations of the faith, the mythical point of view stepped in to arbitrate between the rationalists and supernaturalists.

The rationalists, particularly Eichorn and Paulus, opposed their position to the naturalists and the Deists. The latter had declared the popular deities the inventions of imposters designed to deceive and subjugate the common people. The rationalists, contrary to this

view, believed the gods were benevolent men, wise lawgivers and just rulers of early times, whom the gratitude of their contemporaries and posterity had encircled with divine glory. These proceedings were not fraudulent schemes, with an intention to deceive, but they were altogether natural, considering the mentality of the age, yet morally irreprehensible. The rationalist, influenced by the mythological research of Heyne, perceived that the divine interpositions must be alike admitted, or alike denied, in the primitive histories of all people. To avoid the naturalistic accusation that the accounts of the divine interventions were based upon deceit and falsehood, the rationalists contended that the ancient records were to be interpreted in the spirit of their age. They are the productions of an infant and unscientific age; and treated, without reserve of divine interventions, in accordance with the conception and phraseology of that early period. So that, in point of fact, we have neither miracles to wonder at, on the one hand, nor deceptions to unmask on the other; but simply the language of a former age to translate into that of our day. The supernatural lustre was not a fictitious colouring imparted with a design to deceive, but the natural and spontaneous illumination from antiquity itself. Instead of discarding the kernel along with the husk of history, it was the task of the biblical interpreter, who desires to deal with matters of fact, to separate the constituent elements of fact and opinion so closely

amalgamated and yet in themselves so distinct; and to extricate the pure kernel of fact from the shell of opinion. In order to do this in the absence of any more genuine account which would serve as a correcting parallel, the interpreter must transplant himself in imagination upon the theatre of action, and strive to the utmost to contemplate the events by the light of the age in which they occurred. And from this point of view he must seek to supply the deficiencies of the narrative, by filling in these explanatory collateral circumstances, which the relator himself is so often led by his predilection for the supernatural to leave unnoticed.

But, this view proposed by Eichorn and more completely developed by Paulus, presupposed the Old and New Testament writings to contain a minute and faithful narration, composed shortly after the occurrence of the events, recorded and derived, whenever this was possible, from the testimony of eyewitnesses. For it is only from accurate and original reports, so they assumed that the ungarbled fact can be disentangled from interwoven opinion. Although these interpreters admitted that some of the books were not written contemporaneously with the events, they still believed that the legendary addition could be cleared away and the natural course of history traced. Assuming the historical basis of the Old and New Testaments, they begin to weave them into one consecutive chronologically-arranged detail of facts. The attempts to reduce the miraculous narrative to the natural order of cause and effect are by no means

designed for the purpose of expelling them away, but rather to give credibility to what took place, and to prevent any after-thought about minor circumstances from interfering with our confidence in essentials. When for instance, to illustrate Paulus' procedure, we read that an angel by the name of Gabriel visited Mary to announce to her the maternity of the Messiah, the supernatural circumstances might easily induce us to reject the whole story as fabulous. This indiscriminate rejection of good and bad is prevented, if we learn from some sagacious interpreter to distinguish fact and opinion as mingled in the gospel narratives. We shall then dismiss the story about the angel as a supposition of Mary; but that someone visited her and made the announcement - this, as the true essence of the story, we shall firmly retain. So that, according to the theory of Dr. Paulus, the main point in the above instance is, that some person visited Mary, that such person being the angel Gabriel unnecessary.

Advancing biblical criticism could not accept the assumptions of this school of interpretation. Two reasons are evident and three are given by an anonymous writer - which Strauss quotes: 1. The records were not written by eyewitnesses or by persons nearly contemporaneous with the events. Strauss attempts to substantiate this point in his external evidence for the existence of mythi in the New Testament. 2. That which Paulus reserves in the instance quoted as essential, the Evangelists themselves would have considered so far secondary, or rather worthless, that they would not have thought of telling the story at all under such limitations; that which Paulus calls their opinion

about the fact, constituted in their estimation, the fact itself; the circumstances are the very essence of the story, and if the fact was not as they tell it, it did not happen at all. The anonymous writer whom Strauss agrees with, says that "the essential defect of the natural interpretation as exhibited in its fullest development by Paulus' commentary, is its unhistorical mode of procedure. He objects, so Strauss says: "that it allows conjecture to supply the deficiencies of the record; adopts individual speculations as a substitute for real history; seeks by vain endeavours to represent that as natural which the narrative describes as supernatural; and lastly, evaporates all sacredness and divinity from the Scriptures, reducing them to collections of amusing tales no longer meriting the name of history. According to our author and the anonymous writer Strauss is quoting, this insufficiency of the natural mode of interpretation whilst the supernatural also is felt to be unsatisfactory, lead the mind to the mythical view, which leaves the substance of the narrative unassailed; and instead of venturing to explain the details, accepts the whole, not indeed as true history, but as a sacred legend.¹⁰ Strauss believed that if the mythical view is admitted, the innumerable, and never otherwise to be harmonised discrepancies and chronological contradictions in the gospel histories, disappear, as it were, at one stroke.

10. "Leben Jesus" p.32.

C. CLASSIFICATION OF THE MYTHI.

Now that it had become impossible to rest satisfied with modes of interpretation so unhistorical, an interpretative key must be developed which did justice to both faith and history. While the rationalist had insisted that all primitive histories, whether Hebrew or Pagan, should be treated alike, this equality gradually disappeared. The mythical view became more developed in relation to profane history, but the natural mode of explanation was still used to interpret the Hebrew records. Until it had been proven that the events recorded in the scriptures were not written by eye-witnesses or those nearly contemporaneous with the events, and until it was established that what Paulus reserves as being essential, was in fact, secondary in the minds of the authors of sacred scripture, the mythical view could not be developed in relationship to the Old Testament, much less admitted in the New Testament.

The next decisive step in the realisation of the mythical point of view was taken by Bauer when he explained, after Gabler and Schelling, the nature of the mythus, or upon what grounds a narrative must be recognised as mythus. "A narrative," he explains, "to be recognisable as mythus, first, when it proceeds from an age in which no written records existed, but in which facts were transmitted through the medium of oral tradition alone; secondly, when it presents an historical account of events which are either absolutely or relatively beyond the reach of experience, such as

occurrences connected with the spiritual world, and incidents to which, from the nature of the circumstances, no one could have been witness; or, thirdly, when it deals in the marvelous and is couched in symbolical language."¹¹.

These biblical critics offered the following general definition of the mythus. "It is the representation of an event or of an idea in a form which is historical but at the same time characterised by the rich pictorial and imaginative mode of thought and expression of the primitive ages."¹² They also distinguished several kinds of mythi:

Historical mythi: Narratives of real events coloured by the light of antiquity, which confounded the divine and the human, the natural and the supernatural.

Philosophical mythi: Such as clothe in the garb of historical narrative a simple thought, a precept, or an idea of the time.

Poetical mythi: Historical and philosophical mythi partly blended together, and partly embellished by the creations of the imagination in which the original fact or idea is almost obscured by the veil which the fancy of the poet has woven around it.

To classify the biblical mythi according to these several distinctions is a difficult task, primarily because the mythus which is purely symbolical wears the semblance of history equally with the mythus which

11. "Leben Jesus" p.25.

12. Ibid., p.26.

represents an actual occurrence. These critics, however, laid down rules by which the different myths might be distinguished. The first is, they say, to determine whether the narratives have a distinct object, and what that object is. Where no object, for the sake of which the legend might have been invented, is discoverable, everyone would pronounce the mythus to be historical. But if all the principle circumstances of the narrative concur to symbolise a particular truth, this undoubtedly was the object of the narrative, and the myth is philosophical.

The blending of the historical and philosophical myths is particularly to be recognised when we can detect in the narrative an attempt to derive events from their causes. In many instances the existence of an historical foundation is proved also by independent testimony; sometimes certain particulars in the mythus are intimately connected with known genuine history, or bear in themselves undeniable and inherent characteristics of probability; so that the critic, while he rejects the external form, may yet retain the groundwork as historical. The poetical mythus may be distinguished by the negative criterion offered by Bauer. When the narrative is so wonderful on the one hand as to exclude the possibility of its being a detail of facts, and when on the other it discovers no attempt to symbolise a particular thought, it may be suspected that the entire narrative owes its birth to the imagination of the poet.

These myths, instead of being intentional devices to deceive, were not the artistical product of design and invention. They were unartificial and spontaneous, gliding in of themselves, in the lapse of time and in the course of transmission. The sages of antiquity, so Schelling says, "clothed their ideas in an historical garb, not only in order to accommodate those ideas to the apprehension of a people who must be awakened by sensible impressions, but also on their own account. Deficient themselves in clear abstract ideas, and an inability to give expression to their dim conceptions, they sought to illumine what was obscure in their representations by means of sensible imagery."¹³.

The rationality of the mythical view served to refute the indemonstrable hypotheses which the naturalist mode of interpretation had been weaving around the unproven eye-witness accounts, the groundwork of historical fact. This mode could be retained as long as the events coincided with the records, or the records were nearly contemporaneous. Since the only means of acquaintance with a history is a narrative which we possess concerning it, the naturalists are not justified in inventing a natural course of events. Because we do not possess a paralleled account of the life of Jesus, the critics seeking from the supernatural basis, the natural course of events, will only weave a tissue of absurd hypotheses even more wonderful than the fact itself. The natural interpreters, furthermore, are

13. Ibid., p.27.

not justified to refer the dress in which the events are clothed to poetry, and preserve the events themselves as history. The whole - dress and event - belong to the province of poetry and myths.

The mythicists further pointed out that since the New Testament presents false facts and impossible consequences which no eye-witness could have related, and which could only be the product of tradition, it, too, contains mythi. The thesis that it was customary to look for mythi in fabulous primitive ages where no written records existed, and the possibility that in the time of Jesus writing prohibited mythi in the New Testament, does not to this school present a serious problem. The existence of written documents does not prove the life of Jesus was immediately recorded. The state of excitement among these unpoetical people obscured and concealed facts. Legends were gradually formed, by steps no longer traceable, and not by one individual but under the stimulus of the group. Speaking to this point, Strauss says, "The mythical images were formed by the influence of sentiments common to mankind; and that the different elements grew together without the author's being himself conscious of their incongruity. It is the notion of a certain necessity and unconsciousness in the formation of the ancient mythi, on which we insist."¹⁴. For that

14. Ibid., p.76.

matter, although written documents may have existed in the Gospel era, these documents and the recipients of the message of Jesus were still imbued with the philosophy of history which failed to distinguish between history and super-history. Strauss believes that when the dawn of an historical age is considered, it must be remembered that the birth of history is relative. The people of highly civilised Greece, and of Rome the capital of the world, stood on an eminence which had not been reached in Galilee and Judea.

When it is accepted that we do not possess the immediate record of an eye-witness in any one of the four Gospels, and that each originated from oral tradition, it is much easier to find a continually increasing number of mythi and mythical embellishments.

The impugning of therecords to be eye-witness accounts of the events destroys in one stroke the hypothesis that had governed the existing rationalistic interpretation of the Gospel history. If we do not possess the immediate record of an eye-witness in any one of the four Gospels, and Strauss was intent on establishing the unhistoricity of the fourth Gospel - for when the historical groundwork of the synoptic Gospels had been invalidated, these interpreters retreated to the fourth Gospel and continued to perpetrate their rationalist view of history - then we have no right to suppose that the

ungarbled fact can be disengaged from the miraculous embellishments. Orally transmitted facts intermingled from the lack of historical data, with conjecture, and historical guises and inferences derived from Jewish prophecies, formed in harmony with Jewish-Christian tastes, forbid the chronologically-arranged schemes of the rationalists, and seriously questions the easy manner in which many mythicists detected historical mythus in the New Testament.

In order to answer the question which Strauss had posed, i.e. the invalidity of the half-way position of the mythicists, now that the strictly rationalist position had been refuted, some attention must be given to two inter-related ideas: Strauss' classification of the mythi and the development of myth in the New Testament, with particular emphasis on the origin of myth in the New Testament writings. After the mythicist interpretation of scripture had been established on the basis of external grounds and the authorship of the New Testament writings on internal grounds, the intermixture of fact and idea, some of the supporters of the new theory did not clearly apprehend the nature and the extent which mythi formed the basis of the New Testament. Not only were they content to find myth only in the two extremities, the infancy and resurrection narratives, but their insistence on the absence of myth in the public life of Jesus forced them back upon the rationalist

position which they had sought to refute. The characteristic which had been recognised as constituting the distinction between the historical and philosophical mythus was of a kind which easily betrayed the critic back again into the scarcely abandoned rationalistic explanation. His task, with regard to the historical mythi, was still to separate the natural fact, the nucleus of historical reality, from its unhistorical and miraculous overlays. An essential difference indeed existed, as has been pointed out. The natural explanation attributed the embellishments to the opinion of the actors concerned, or of the recipients; the mythical interpretation derived them from tradition; but the mode of proceeding was left too little determined. If the rationalist could point out historical mythi in the Bible, without materially changing his mode of explanation; so the supernaturalist, on his part, felt himself less offended by the admission of historical mythi - which still preserved to the sacred narratives a basis of fact - than by the supposition of philosophical mythi, which seemed to annihilate every trace of historical foundation. The inconsistent mythicists, Bauer, in particular, so Strauss contends, fall under this criticism and contribute to this confusion. When, for instance, Bauer thought he was explaining Jehovah's promise to Abraham as an historical mythus - admitting as the fundamental fact of the narrative Abraham's hopes of a numerous posterity, awakened by the contemplation of the

star-sown heavens - Bauer imagined he had seized the mythical point of view. Yet another theologian imagining he was also faithful to the mythical view, divested the announcement of the birth of the Baptist of the supernatural but retained the dumbness of Zachariah as the historical groundwork. In like manner, Krug immediately after assuring us that his intention is not to explain the substance of the history (according to the natural mode), but to explain the origin of the narrative (according to the mythical view), constitutes an accidental journey of oriental merchants the basis of the narrative of the visit of the wise men from the East. But the contradiction is most glaring when we meet with palpable misconceptions of the true nature of a mythus in a work on the mythology of the New Testament, such as Bauer's; in which, for instance, he admits, in the case of the parents of John the Baptist, a marriage which had actually been childless during many years - in which he explains the angelic appearance at the birth of Jesus as a meteoric phenomenon; supposes the occurrence of lightning and the accidental descent of a dove at his baptism; constitutes a storm the groundwork of the transfiguration; and converts the angels at the tomb of the risen Jesus into white grave-clothes. Even Gabler, who had otherwise made the most pertinent contributions to the study of myth in the Bible, confounds the natural explanation

with the historical mythical view and the historical with philosophical mythi. In spite of his predilection in favour of the philosophical mythus in relation to biblical history, and his careful guarding against the arbitrary proceeding of handling as philosophical a mythus through which a fact unquestionably glimmers, and avoiding the opposite tendency to explain naturally or historically that which belongs properly to mythical clothing, one is surprised, Strauss maintains, to find Gabler himself was ignorant of the true nature both of the historical and of the philosophical mythus.

The confused eclectic point of view, as Strauss calls it, owes its origin to those who neither give up the history, nor are able to satisfy themselves with its clear results, but who think to unite both parties by this middle course - a vain endeavour, thinks Strauss, which the rigid supernaturalist pronounces heretical, and the rationalist derides.

It is at this point in the discussion which one can easily accuse Strauss of descending into what he himself condemns as the onesidedness of the position which despairs of disengaging the historical contents from the mythical narratives of the scriptures; consequently being led to handle the whole mass of Gospel mythi as philosophical, at least in so far as to relinquish the endeavour to

extract from them a residuum of historical fact. Though he says that when he undertakes to extract the historical contents which may possibly exist in narratives recognised as mythical, he would be equally careful neither on the one part, by a rude and mechanical separation, to place himself on the same ground with the natural interpreter, nor, on the other, by a hypercritical refusal to recognise such contents where they actually exist, to lose sight of the history. But the question lingers, especially in the light of the scarcity of historical facts which Strauss admits in the history or the ones uncontaminated in the Gospels: "Does he in fact get beyond the arbitrary selection of fact which characterises the view which he was anxious to oppose?" Before Strauss' own classification of the mythus in the New Testament, the distinctions and gradations of mythi and the criteria which distinguishes the unhistorical in the Gospel narrative, can be elucidated, some consideration must be given to the primary reason why he supposed myth to be found in the New Testament.

D. THE NATURE OF THE MYTHI IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In one place in his discussion, Strauss makes a very pointed statement which may illustrate his position on the problem of myth in the New Testament possibly better than any other one phrase in the introductory section: "Now, if the

15. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
 16. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
 17. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

history of the life of Jesus be of mythical creation of a fact out of an idea, inasmuch as it embodies the vivid impression of the original idea which the first Christian community had of their founder, this history, though unhistorical in its form, is, nevertheless, a faithful representation of the idea of the Christ. If, instead of this, the history be legendary - (seeing of an idea in a fact) if the actual external facts are given in a distorted and often magnified form - are represented in a false light and embody a false idea - then, on the contrary, the real tenor of the life of Jesus is lost to us."¹⁵. But the idea of the Messiah, transferred from the Old Testament to the New, is true and retained intact. In the case of the synoptic presentation, the idea of the Messiah arose gradually through the spontaneous, unconscious excitement in the primitive community; but, in the case of the fourth Gospel, invented and created from the tradition by one individual. The ideas which were narrated into facts arose unconsciously, unintentionally - in the community with this as the guiding rule: "Such and such things must have happened to the Messiah; Jesus was the Messiah; therefore such and such things happened to him."¹⁶. Strauss profers an illustrative syllogism: "The Messiah was to come from Bethlehem, Jesus was the Messiah, consequently he must have been born in Bethlehem."¹⁷. The

15. Ibid., p.43.

16. Ibid., p.82.

17. Ibid., p.83.

expectation of a Messiah had grown up amongst the Israelite people long before the time of Jesus, and just then had ripened to full maturity. From its beginning this expectation was not indefinite, but determined and characterised by many particulars. Moses was said to have promised his people a prophet like unto himself, and this passage was in the time of Jesus applied to the Messiah. Hence the rabbinical principle: As the first redeemer, so shall be the second; which principle was carried out into many particulars to be expected in the Messiah after his prototype Moses. Again the Messiah was to come of the race of David, and as a second David take possession of his throne; therefore, in the time of Jesus it was expected that he, like David, should be born in the little village of Bethlehem. Moses describes the supposed Messiah as a prophet; so, in his own idea, Jesus was the greatest and last of the prophetic race. It was natural, Strauss claims, for the Jews - with their allegorising tendency - to consider their actions and destiny as types of the Messiah. On the basis of the predictions it was necessary beforehand that the Messiah's life should be adorned with that which was most glorious and important in the lives of the prophets. These merely figurative expressions, that is, in the Messianic expectations, soon came to be understood literally (Matt. XI:5, Luke VII, 21 f.),

and thus the idea of the Messiah was continually filled up with new details, even before the appearance of Jesus. Thus many of the legends respecting him had not to be newly invented; they already existed in the popular hope of the Messiah, having been mostly derived with various modifications from the Old Testament, and had merely to be transferred to Jesus and accommodated to his character and doctrines."¹⁸ The evangelists had only to unite in one representation the different existing traits; in fact, the picture arises of its own accord before the reader. With reference to the birth of John the Baptist, Zacharias and Elizabeth (Luke 1), like Abraham and Sarah when Isaac was promised to them, were "well stricken in years" (Gen. XVIII:11). That the father did not believe, and desired a sign in confirmation of the announcement, is related here (Luke 1:11) with almost the same words as Gen. XV:8. The song of praise in Luke 1 is taken almost word for word from the story of the birth of Samuel (1 Sam. 11), who was in like manner a late-born child. The appearance of the angels and the statement that the boy should be a Nazarene who should drink no wine or intoxicant, are features also of the birth of Samson (Lukel:15ff; cf. Judg. XIII 5); both are holy from their birth. The same thing is true also with regard to the story of the birth of Jesus himself. Here one has

18. Ibid., p.95.

a definite foothold in the passage in the Old Testament, especially to be noted in Matthew's Gospel. It was inferred from Isa. VIII:14 that the Messiah must be born of a virgin (Matt.1:23). But Isaiah here spoke of a young woman: it was the Greek translator who first made this into virgin. In this passage Isaiah was not thinking at all of the Messiah, while the translator, quite probably, and the Christian certainly, supposed that was what was meant. The supernatural birth of the Messiah, and thus of Jesus, has been inferred from the passage. The tendency of the Ancients to represent great men and benefactors of their race as sons of God must also be remembered; Hercules and Discus, Romulus and Alexander, Pythagoras and Plato, are some of those concerning whom stories of a supernatural generation have been accepted - and so on, infinitum, through the entire history of the New Testament.

To the objection that the interval between the death of Jesus and the formation of the narratives was too short for the rich collection of myths, and especially for the application of the messianic myths to Jesus, Strauss says: If we assume that the greater part of these myths did not arise during the interval, but originated in the legends of the Old Testament, before and after the Babylonish exile and were transferred with suitable modifications to the expected Messiah, then regardless of the length of the

interval, myth already existed. In the period between the formation of the first Christian community and the writing of the Gospels, there remains to be effected only the transference of messianic legends, almost all ready formed, to Jesus, with some alterations to adapt them to Christian opinions, and to the individual character and circumstances of Jesus: only a very small proportion of mythi having to be formed entirely new.

The history of the New Testament is really the poetry of a people whose imagination had been fired with the fairy tales of the ancient world and with the narratives of the Old Testament. What kernel of historical truth remains under this poetry? Without coming to grips with this question in a manner which it deserves, at the moment we shall offer some observations on Strauss' treatment, more by way of indicating the movements in his thought to this point: 1. Strauss' critique of the evangelical records consists, it would seem, in converting into causes what the Church of Christ recognises as effects. The Church created its Christ virtually out of pure imagination. Christ receives his majesty from the community; he did not, as Christendom has believed, in accordance with John XV11:22, Cor.11:18, impart his majesty to his disciples. But if the Church created

Christ from the Old Testament prototypes - scrutinising and comparing Jesus with previous standards - we are left with this query: What created, or who created the Church? Whom does the author represent as the originator of this revelation in the world? No one. The origin of Christianity vanishes into the thickest mist. The authors of the prefatory history in the Gospels, it would seem, compounded their narratives like a mosaic out of different antitypes in the Old Testament. Schweitzer's comment clarifies our critique: "He does not see that while in many cases he has shown clearly enough the source of the form of the narrative in question, this does not suffice to explain its origin. Doubtless, there is mythical material in the story of the feeding of the multitude, but the existence of the story is not explained by referring to the manna in the desert, or the miraculous feeding of a multitude by Elisah. The story in the Gospel has far too much individuality for that, and stands, moreover, in much too closely articulated an historical connection. It must have as its basis some historical fact. It is not myth, though there is myth in it. Similarly with the account of the transfiguration. The substratum of historical fact in the life of Jesus is much

more extensive than Strauss is prepared to admit. Sometimes he fails to see the foundations, because he proceeds like an explorer who, in working on the ruins of an Assyrian city, should cover up the most valuable evidence with the rubbish thrown out from another portion of the excavations."¹⁹

2. It is not the correspondence in the acts and events of Jesus' life with ancient predictions that caused his reception by the Israelites as the promised Christ; but it is a presumption, somehow existing independent, that he must be the Christ, that united with the recollection of those predictions in the people's minds to make up the story of this accomplishment. In other words, while discussing the Messianic prophecies, Strauss never really makes much of the reasons why certain expectations were attached to Jesus. Recognising the several messianic expectations elaborated in Jewish history, how were these expectations sorted out in the minds of the evangelists if we assume as Strauss leads us to believe he does, the personality of Jesus to have had such a minimal effect on the narrators of that history? 3. Even on the Hegelian principle, that at the head of all finite transactions, and historical ones among the rest, individuals stand as "the subjectivities that realise the substantiality of the idea," Jesus

19. Schweitzer, Albert, "The Quest Of The Historical Jesus" p.84.

the Christ may have his place, not as the one spoken of in the New Testament, but as primus inter pares, in the chapel of the enlightened Emperor Alexander Severus (Straussian comparison) where he stood with Orpheus or Homer as companions; where, too, we may assign to him in his own religious department, Moses, and also Mohammed, for his associates.

4. While Strauss never did deny the historicity of Jesus, his critique seriously raises the question of the historical existence of the person of Jesus. Gospel history is regarded merely as the embellishment of the picture of the Messiah, which had taken shape in the religious consciousness of the Church.

III. Gradations of the Mythi.

A. Evangelical Mythus.

A narrative relating directly or indirectly to Jesus, which may be considered not as the expression of a fact, but as the product of an idea of his earliest followers. This mythus may constitute the substance of the narrative,

or it may sometimes be an accidental adjunct to the actual history.

B. Pure Mythus.

This type may have two sources. The one source is the Messianic ideas and expectations existing according to their several forms in the Jewish mind before Jesus, and independently of him; the other is that particular impression which was left by the personal character, actions, and fate of Jesus, and which served to modify the Messianic idea in the minds of the people. The account of the transfiguration, for example, is derived almost exclusively from the former source; the only amplification taken from the latter source being that they who appeared with Jesus on the Mount spoke of his decease. On the other hand, the narrative of the rending of the veil of the temple at the death of Jesus seems to have had its origin in the hostile position which Jesus, and his Church after him, sustained in relation to the Jewish temple worship. Here already we have something historical, though consisting merely of certain general features of character, position, etc., we are thus at once brought upon the ground of the historical mythus.

C. Historical Mythus.

This type has for its groundwork a definite

individual fact which has been seized upon by religious enthusiasm, and twined around with mythical conceptions culled from the idea of Christ. This fact is perhaps a saying of Jesus such as that concerning "fishers of men" or the barren fig-tree, which now appear in the Gospels transmuted into marvelous histories; or it is perhaps a real transaction or event taken from his life; for instance, the mythical traits in the account of the baptism were built upon such a reality.

By way of explanation, Strauss says that the unhistorical which these myths embody - whether formed gradually by tradition, or created by an individual author - is in each case the product of an idea. But for the parts of history which are distorted, misconstrued through transformation and transmission and which point to a traditionary origin, the term legendary is certainly more appropriate.

D. Addition of the Author.

That which does not point to the impetus to clothe an idea or can be referred to tradition, must be regarded as the addition of the author, as purely individual, and designed merely to give clearness, connection, and climax, to the representation. Strauss illustrates from the passage which speaks of the "renting of the

curtain in the temple." "The author must have known it would appear that he had neither seen this happen nor heard it from anyone but that he had invented it himself. But in this very instance an allegorical form of speech such as we find in Heb.X:19ff; to the effect that the death of Jesus opened the way for us through the curtain into the holy of holies, might have easily been understood by hearer in a literal sense and thus that story may have arisen entirely without consciousness of invention."²⁰.

IV. Criterion by which to distinguish the unhistorical in the Gospel narrative:

Having shown, Strauss believed, the possible existence of the mythical and the legendary in the Gospels, both on extrinsic and intrinsic grounds, and defined their distinctive characteristics, it remains in conclusion to inquire how their actual presence may be recognised in individual cases.

The mythus presents two phases. In the first place it is not history, in the second it is fiction - the product of the particular mental tendency of a certain community. These two phases afford the one a negative the other a positive criterion, by which the mythus is to be recognised.

1. Negative: History does not suffer violations. The cause and effect relationship invalidates miracles, ("Indeed no just notion of the true nature of history is possible, without a perception of the inviolability of the chain of finite cases, and of the impossibility of miracles"),²¹ demands that events conform to the law of succession, preserves the unbroken laws of psychology whereby no individual or group can act in a manner directly opposed to his own habitual mode. To be regarded as historically valid a narrative must neither be inconsistent with itself nor in contradiction with other accounts.

2. Positive: An account may be positively asserted to be legendary or poetical, partly by its form, partly by its substance. If the form be poetical, if the actors converse in hymns, in a more diffuse and elevated strain than might be expected from their training or their situations, then these discourses, at least, can not be accepted as historical. If the contents of a narrative are in striking agreement with certain ideas current within the region in which the narrative originated, which themselves seem to be formed from pre-conceived opinions rather than from actual

21. Ibid., p.74-75.

experience, then, according to the circumstances, it is more or less probable that such a narrative had a mythical origin. Strauss knew quite well that at that time those criteria might not be applied in a mechanical manner to the lives of great men, and that all of them have simply relative value from the point of view of proof. Only in cases where several such signs are found together can a conclusion drawn from them be accepted as probable or certain. Strauss instances the concurrence of signs from the visit of the Magi and the murder of the innocents at Bethlehem to illustrate the probability of myth: "This event harmonises remarkably with the Jewish Messianic notion, built upon the prophecy of Balaam, respecting the star which should come out of Jacob; and with the history of the sanguinary command of Pharaoh. Still this alone would not suffice to stamp the narrative as mythical. But we have also the corroborative facts that the described appearance of the star is contrary to the physical, the alleged conduct of Herod to the psychological laws; that Josephus, who gives in other respects so circumstantial an account of Herod, agrees with all other historical authorities in being silent concerning the

Bethlehem massacre; and that the visit of the Magi, together with the flight into Egypt, related in the one Gospel, and the presentation in the Temple related in another Gospel, mutually exclude one another. Wherever, as in this instance, the several criteria of the mythical concur, the result is certain, and certain in proportion to the accumulation of such grounds of evidence." 22.

In the Gospel records the difficult question has to be settled whether a record in which there are legendary traits may be said to be entirely unhistorical, or merely in those traits. To separate the historical elements from the fine web of legend, which weaves itself around all human history, needs delicate and practised hands.

V. Summary and Criticism of Strauss' Interpretative

Key.

Does Strauss manage to separate the element of fact in the New Testament from the mythical adjuncts which have been blended with it - and determine how much may belong to the one, and how much to the other, without relapsing into the forced rationalised attempts to sketch a natural course of history, once the myths have been dissolved? Does he retain a residuum of

22. Ibid., p.91.

fact in the Gospel history - or, because the history is so inseparably wedded to the idea, does he forego any attempt to disclose how much fact he really discovers in the New Testament? He admits in his Popular life for the German people that the previous "Life of Jesus", four in number, each wavering, vacillating, between saying one thing and taking it back in another edition, that he proceed then to discuss the Life of Jesus analytically - from the exterior to the interior, from the husk to the kernel, seeking to penetrate from the upper strata to the primeval rock; and, in the process, separating off what was inadmissible to arrive at what was true. There was no place for summing up his conclusions and developing into one result what might have been the truth as regards the person and history of Christ, looked at from a strictly historical point of view. Strauss, even in his earlier lives of Jesus, does not reject the existence of Jesus, though at that time, he seriously questioned the historical, adequate and unprejudiced knowledge of the actual facts involved. He was so intent on pointing out, to the rationalists and the eclectic mythicists that, on internal grounds, the New Testament narratives were so promiscuously blended - constituting unhistorical ingredients and historical fact - that it was extremely difficult to determine the element of fact when the unhistorical

resting place was gained - beyond which a further
 embellishments were discarded. But, in 1864,
 he was more confident that he could get behind
 the unhistorical layers to the historical
 kernel. Since the position taken step by step
 by historical criticism had been made secure and
 "we know now for certain what Jesus was not, and
 did not do, that it is nothing superhuman or
 supernatural, and thus it will be all the more
 possible for us to follow the intimations of
 the Gospels as to the natural and human in him,
 so far as to be able to show, at least in
 rough outline, what he was and what his object
 was."²³ From the analytical discussions
 it had been made clear to Strauss that the
 conceptions of Jesus transformed into a
 temperature in which it could not fail to put
 for the numerous unhistorical shoots, one ever
 more miraculous than another, in the most
 luxurious growth - the gradual development of
 the conceptions formed of Jesus, the enrichment
 of the history of his life with traits ever
 more and more ideal. First deposits of the
 unhistorical, then how over every layer a new
 one formed, how every one of these layers was
 only the precipitate from the former conceptions
 of the period and the circle within which it
 grew till, at last, with the Gospel of John, a

23. Ibid., Vol.I. p.216.

resting place was gained - beyond which a further advance and, at the same time, a higher spiritualisation, was no longer possible and also no longer required. ^{24.}

Although he manages to write a life of Jesus in 1864 and present a definite portrait of Him, this picture made him an outstanding ethical reformer, a transformer of the statutory moral laws to an ethic of good disposition. Whether Strauss succeeded in distinguishing his position from the eclectic mythicists, who had sought to retain the historical and philosophical mythus and discover some unadulterated facts, is only implied in his critical section. The answer must be looked for in his concluding section, "The Dogmatic import of the Life of Jesus". By way of preparation, a passage from this section illumines our way. Speaking about the tasks of the philosopher and historian, Strauss says: "The real state of the case is this: The Church refers her Christology to an individual who existed historically at a certain period; the speculative theologian to an idea which only attained existence in the totality of individuals; by the Church the evangelical narratives are received as history; by the critical theologian they are regarded for the most part as mere mythic." ^{25.}

24. Ibid., p.217, Vol.1.

25. "Leben Jesus" 1 volume. p.782.

VI. "Dogmatic Import of the Life of Jesus":

Conclusive light can be thrown on Strauss' distinction between the historical and philosophical mythus, and the supremacy of the latter, by giving some attention to the implications which he draws from his historical survey of the life of Jesus. Though he draws out in detail the philosophical points of his Christology only in the concluding section - as though they were the result of his preceeding critical examinations - we have only to refer to the preface of his work, and to the reasons why the theologian could attempt such a critical study, to arrive at the conclusion illustrated by the maxim, "What is last in execution is first in intention." The brief outline of his dogmatic presuppositions will enable us to form some ideas of the rationale which governs his mythicising process.

In the opening paragraph to this section, Strauss begins by admitting that in the process of the argument, considerable doubt had been thrown on the acknowledgment of the historical mythus - that is to say, that an historical fact exists at all on which myth has been woven. Apparently the inquiry, so he believed, had permanently crippled the factual basis of the faith and irretrievably dissipated the boundless

store of truth and life which for eighteen centuries has been the alien of humanity. He says essentially the same thing in a much more descriptive manner at the conclusion of his 1864 work: "After removing the mass of mythical parasites of different kinds that have clustered around the tree, we see that what we before considered branches, foliage, colour, and form of the tree itself, belonged for the most part to those parasitical creepers; and instead of the removal of them having restored the tree to us in its true condition and appearance, (the supposition of the rationalist), we find, on the contrary, that they have swept away its proper foliage, sucked out the sap, crippled the shoots and branches, and consequently that its original figure has essentially disappeared. Every mythical feature added to the form of Jesus has not only obscured an historical one, so that with the removal of the first the latter will come to light, but very many have been destroyed by the mythical forms that have overlaid them, and been thus completely lost."²⁶

Although there is little of which in the New Testament we can say for certain took place, and of all to which the faith of the Church especially attaches itself - the miraculous and supernatural matter in the facts and doctrines of Jesus - it is far more certain

that it did not take place; in reality, the happiness of mankind cannot depend upon belief in things of which it is in part certain they did not take place, in part uncertain whether they did take place, and only to the smallest extent beyond doubt that they took place. What then can be done for a faith which rests on such precarious grounds? With this in mind, Strauss proposes to restore to the pious believer all that he might think lost by the destructive mythical process applied to the life of Jesus. In the interests of faith and science, Christianity, recognised as the most excellent religion, must be identified with the highest philosophic truth. How was this identification accomplished? By cutting the roots of Christianity from history.

The Hegelian dialectical triad serves him in this process. The thesis is the orthodox christology, the antithesis, the rationalists, the eclectic christology of Schliermacher, the christology interpreted symbologically by Kant and De Wette, and the synthesis, which is the negation of the negation, is the speculative christology of Hegel.

The problem which must be met in this theological reconciliation between religion and the deepest

philosophical truth concerns the assumption which traditional Christology makes about the individual God-Man. The Church refers her Christology to an individual who existed historically at a certain period; the speculative theologian to an idea which attains existence in the totality of individuals: By the Church the evangelical narratives are received as history; by the critical theologian they are regarded for the most part as mere mythi.²⁷

The Church on the basis of its imaginative, pictorial presentation assumes that one man - one individual - was the God-Man, but the speculative Christologist demands to be led to the idea in the fact, to the race in the individual. A theology, to this speculative mind, which in its doctrines on the Christ stops short at him as an individual is not properly a theology, but a homily or a sermon.²⁸ Simply, the problem is this: How the Divine and human nature can have constituted the distinct and yet united position of an historical person?

Orthodox Christology, working on the basis of a supernatural world view, or at least the possibility of a miracle in the conception of Jesus Christ, and the veracity of the

27. "Leben Jesus" 1 Volume, p.782.

28. Ibid., p.782, Vol.1.

evangelical history, preserved in the creedal affirmations at Nicea and Calcedia the doctrine of the one Christ subsisting in the two natures, each with its properties entire and unconfused. But how can these things be? Strauss inquires. The roots of the complicated exchange of properties, the union of the two natures in one person, cannot be reconciled, so he contends, with the view that ordinarily one nature is common to many individuals or persons, but in the creedal formulations, one person is supposed to partake of two different natures. Also concerning the work of Christ, never as succinctly defined by the Church as Strauss supposes, the ideas of revelation and miracles were chiefly called into question. The perfect God, on the basis of an enlightened view of him and of History, could not have created a world which from time to time needed the extraordinary interposition of the Creator, nor more particularly, a human nature which was incapable of attaining its destination by the development of its innate faculties; that the immutable Being could not operate on the world first in this manner, then in that, at one time mediately, at another immediately, but that he must always have operated on it in the same manner, namely in

himself and on the whole immediately, but for us and on individuals mediately.²⁹.

The rationalist, oppressed by the severity of the Orthodox Christology and seeking to understand the doctrines of the faith in the light of the discoveries in Science and the enlightened philosophy of History, propounded in its stead a system which, in Strauss' opinion, considers Christ as a highly distinguished man, who by his faultless life and example, realised his unique destiny. But in the defence of the Church's confession, Strauss says this is not the Christ that the Church affirms. Every system of religious doctrine must perform two functions in Strauss' opinion: They must, first, give an adequate expression of the faith which is the object of the doctrine and they must place this expression in a relation, whether positive or negative, to science. The rationalist in an effort to meet the latter requirement, minimised and distorted the faith.

The Eclectic Christology, of Schiermacher, as Strauss calls it, who, while pursuing to an uncommon degree the negative process of Rationalism against the Church doctrine, undertook to reconstruct the positive Christian faith in a way of his own. How then does the

29. "Leben Jesus" 1 Volume, p.765-766.

In respect of faith, because whilst the many attempt of Schiermacher to rescue men at the same time from the difficulties of supernaturalism and the emptiness of the rationalistic school, succeed in the judgement of this critic? He first states in full the doctrine of the Gaubenslehre:- that the certain possession in the Christian community of a means of purification and perfection can be traced to no other source than to its adored Head; that the existence in Christ of this fullness of communicable virtue is the meaning of God being incarnate in his person; and, since this archetypal character, which his Church ever approaches but never fully reaches, pervades every historical event of his life, this is the meaning of the divine and human natures being united in his one person: while the miraculous conception, the supernatural works, the resurrection and ascension of Christ, are believed, if at all, historically only, as read in Scripture, but not as associated with our interior experience. Of this system Strauss pronounces, that though it is the nearest approach possible to the establishment of united divinity and humanity in one personal Christ, it is, nevertheless, a failure both in respect of science and of faith.

In respect of faith: because amidst the many particulars in which it is a very inadequate substitute for the Church system, this appears, as he observes, among the most striking, that it excludes from spiritual consideration the resurrection of Christ, the foundation stone of the Christian system, the centre of its cycle of festivals, and sinks consequently with it the true conception of the Lord's death, as well as of his ascension into heaven. Then, too, when the validity of the person of Christ, or the God-consciousness which he mediated, rests merely on a backward inference from the inward experience of the Christian as the effect to the person of Christ as the cause, the Christology of Schiermacher has but a frail support, since it cannot prove that that inward experience is not to be experience without the actual existence of Christ.³⁰ In respect of science - the grand objection against the system is simply that such union of the archetypal and the historical cannot be: not only, we are told, because all art, science and ability ought to be united with piety in an archetype (a condition which the life of Christ cannot supply), but because even in the department of piety, the ideal in an individual historical

30. Ibid. P.772.

person cannot be realised without miracle. Though Schiermacher recognised only an act of Divine creative power only in the constitution of the person of Christ, this concession will not, in Strauss' judgement, repair the breach which the supposition only of one miracle makes in the scientific view of the world.

Nor will Schiermacher's philosophy remove the metaphysical difficulties connected with ascribing to one man in the developmental chain, a freely developed, perfected, sinless personality. This assumption would be contradictory, or contrary, to the laws of all development to regard the initial member of a series as the greatest - to suppose that in Christ, the founder of that community, the object of which is the strengthening of the consciousness of God, the strength of this consciousness was absolute, a perfection which is rather the infinitely distant goal of the progressive development of the community founded by Him. As neither an individual in general, nor in particular, in an historical series can present the perfect ideal, so, if Christ be regarded decidedly as man, the archetypal nature and development which Schiermacher ascribes to him, cannot be brought to accord with the laws of Human existence.

The failure to retain in combination two discordant ideas - the ideal in Christ and the Historical Jesus - resulted in the latter falling as a natural residuum to the ground and the former rising as a pure sublimate into the ethereal world of Ideas. Historically, Jesus can have been nothing more than a person, highly distinguished indeed, but subject to the limitations inevitable to all that is mortal. By means of his exalted character, however, he exerted so powerful an influence over the religious sentiment, that it constituted him the ideal of piety - in accordance with the general rule, that an historical fact or person cannot become the basis of positive religion until it is elevated into the sphere of the ideal. Gradually Strauss is implicitly elaborating his Christology. Although he may censor Schiermacher's conception of the relationship between the historical Jesus and the Ideal Christ, the same irreconcilable relationship exists in Strauss' Christology.

But, meanwhile, to proceed with his preparatory analysis... undertaken with the expressed design to invalidate and substantiate his own.

The first noticed Christology which attempts to fill up the impersonal and purely ideal conception, inherited, in part, from Schiermacher, but finding its origin in Spinoza, is that of

Immanuel Kant. Spinoza's statement, which influenced 19th Century Christological thinking, (Hegel, Shelling, Kant, Fichte, Strauss, Scheliemarcher, "that to know Christ after the flesh is not the matter necessary for salvation, but to know the Eternal son of God"), is elaborated by the symbolical (as Strauss calls it) Christology of Kant.

Kant's philosophy, as we noted in another section of the thesis, ventured to exclude from his religion "of pure reason" the necessity of supposing an individual man, whose holiness and merit were available for others as well as himself, and to place in his stead an ideal of moral perfection, to which, as seated in the reason, and thence extending its power over the whole man, the mental view should be directed by a moral and not an historical faith. This ideal is the Logos, the Son by whom God made all, in whom he loves the world: and though, in a world like the present, it appears that we cannot otherwise represent to ourselves this ideal than as embodied in a man - a man exhibiting its moral force in the strongest contrast with opposed evil, against the most powerful temptations, to the extremity of suffering

and the most ignominious death - we are still desired to remember that the binding and assimilating virtue belongs to the archetype in our pure reason, not in the human example - which is never perfectly adequate - which may appear variously among men according to circumstances, but to which in no living instance are we warranted in ascribing a supernatural origin.

Strauss, on the basis of the faith, objects to this Kantian view. He says that, while Kant emphasises in his own characteristic way the suffering and death of Christ (the crucifixion of the flesh or the old man in those who realise the divine archetype) he makes no use of Christ's resurrection and ascension. Instead of the Divine reality which faith discovers in the history of Christ, Kantian idealism offers an overwhelming obligation - a duty which each man must assume to free himself. Even Science, according to Strauss, objects to a philosophy which calls for obedience to a reality which has not been effected.

Strauss extends his objection on the same score to the symbolical Christology as carried out into the story of the Gospels by De Wette

and Horst. While considering the life and history of Jesus Christ to be fabulous in every supernatural part, these men regard the history as the eternal power of symbolic truth, so that, what to the old believers were holy Facts and Histories are to them no less holy Fictions - human nature and the religious impulse remaining exactly as they were before. Horst and De Wette, according to Strauss' interpretation, admit that the first Christians needed the factual history to animate their religious and moral disposition, but it must be remembered that ideas constituted the inmost kernel of this history. These facts have become superannuated and doubtful, and only for the sake of the fundamental, inherent idea, are the narratives of the facts an object of reverence.

Strauss, ostensibly defending the claims of the Christian Faith, opposes what he calls these empty and unrealised ideas. If Kant, De Wette and Horst are to be believed, the Christian must turn his view from a reconciled world to an unreconciled one, from a world of happiness into a world of misery. As we shall soon see, Strauss' criticism of the system on the basis of the infinite approximation toward the idea which is to be reached after endless

progression is, in fact, somewhat characteristic of his own Christology.

The two sets of objections to each of the above several systems in succession, as causing the mutilation of faith and the offence of science, serve merely to set the stage for the Christology which will, according to Strauss, satisfy the requirements of both science and faith. Before advancing to outline this perfect Christology, it is well to repeat what has been said elsewhere: many of Strauss' views are implicit in the Christologies which he castigates. These ideas may be summarised. (1) The impossibility of Miracle - even the concession of one unusual phenomenon vis á vis the case of Jesus Christ will offend Science. If the unity of the Divine and Human must actually have been manifested, as it never had been, and never more will be, in one individual, this reconciliation will contradict the mode which the Idea realises itself. According to Strauss, .. It (the Idea) is not wont to lavish all its fullness on one exemplar and be niggardly towards all others - to express itself perfectly in that one individual and imperfectly in all the rest: It, rather, loves to distribute its riches among a multiplicity of exemplars which reciprocally complete each

other - in the alternate appearance and suppression of a series of individuals."³¹.

The mode of the development of the Idea from the lower to the higher, which science has established, rules out the archetypal realisation of the Idea in one perfect exemplar.

(2) The real point at stake here, one which Strauss finally develops in connection with his speculative Christology, (so termed by himself), concerns his doctrine of God and His relationship with the world. The Idea posits Itself (Himself) in the Other, which is understood to be Nature, or humanity. The Idea develops through this Other and returns to Itself as the Other continually realises in the idea, or as the Other comes to the Notion that it is indeed the God-man, not individually, but corporately.

VII. Strauss' Speculative Reconstruction of Christology.

Strauss begins his reconstruction of Christology by referring to the Idea of God in the most recent philosophy, viz. Hegel's "Phenomenology of Spirit". From the vantage

31. Ibid., p.779-780.

point of this higher mode of argumentation, Strauss proceeds to sketch the Idea of God and Man in their reciprocal relation. When God is spoken of as Spirit, it is a necessary consequence of that statement that, so far as man is spirit, there is no distinction or difference between them. The newest philosophy bids us view the infinite God not as without or above the finite, but as comprehended in it - setting forth all finite existence, nature and the human soul merely as his own exterior manifestation; from which He ever again in like manner draws them back into unity with Himself. Or, as he said of the enlightened view of science in connection with his discussion of Kant's Christology: The idea conceives that.. "the infinite has its existence in the alternate production and extinction of the finite." Strauss continues: "As Man, considered as a finite spirit, limited to finite nature has not truth; so God considered exclusively as an infinite Spirit, shut up in his infinitude has not reality.... The infinite Spirit is real only when it discloses itself in finite spirits; as the finite spirit is true only when it merges itself in the infinite. The true and real

existence of spirit, therefore, is neither in God by Himself, nor in man by himself, but in the God-man; neither in the infinite alone, nor in the finite alone, but in the interchange of impartation and withdrawal between the two, which, on the part of God, is revelation; on the part of man, is Religion."³².

Proceeding along Hegelian lines, and now we are to see more clearly that his Christology cannot be understood apart from his adopted philosophy, Strauss discusses the History of Religion - the rise of the Absolute Religion. He says that, so long as man knows not that he is spirit, he cannot know that God is man. While under the guidance of nature, prior to the emergence of self-consciousness and the necessary differentiation involved, man will worship Nature. When he has learned to submit himself to law and regulate his natural tendencies by external means, he will conceive of God as a Law Giver. But, continues the story of man's pilgrimage, when in the vicissitudes of the World's History the natural state discloses its corruptions, the legal its misery; the former will experience the need of a God who elevates it above itself,

32. "Life of Jesus" Vol.I. p.777.

33. Ibid., p.778.

the latter, of a God who descends to its level. "Man being once nature enough to receive as his religion the truth that God is man, and man of a Divine race, it necessarily follows, since religion is the form in which the truth presents itself to the popular mind, that this truth must appear in a genuine, intelligible way to all, as a fact obvious to the senses. In other words, there must appear a human individual who is recognised as the visible God. This God-man unity is in a single being, the divine essence and the human personality; it may be said of him that he had the Divine Spirit for a father and a woman for his mother."³³ Inasmuch as he is viewed not in himself but as reflected in the Divine substance, he is thus divinely sinless and perfect; as man of a divine essence he has power over nature and works miracles; but, as God in a human manifestation, he is dependent on Nature - subject to its necessities and sufferings, even to the last debt of death..."The God-man Himself dies and shows thereby that it is God with his assumed humanity in real earnest; that he has not disdained to descend to the lowest

33. Ibid., p.778.

depth of finite being - while he, even from that depth, knows how to find a way of return to himself; even when the exinanition is most complete, he can remain identical with himself. Yet more, inasmuch as the God-man as a spirit reflected into its infinity stands contrasted with men as holding their finite state, an opposition and a fight is thence set forth, and the death of the God-man is defined as a violent one by the hands of sinners; whereby to physical distress is added also the moral one of the disgrace and condemnation of transgression. If God thus found his way from heaven to the grave, so must also a way be found for man from the grave to heaven: the death of the Prince of Life is the life of the mortal.

Already, by his coming into the world as God-man, has God shown Himself reconciled with the world; but yet more, in that, by dying, he stripped himself of his natural state, has he shown the way by which he ever carries the reconciliation into effect; viz. by ever remaining identical with himself throughout the condensation to a natural condition and the throwing off of this again. Inasmuch as the death of the God-man is only the throwing off

of his exinanition (or humiliation), it is, in fact, an exaltation and return to God: and thus the death is actually followed by the resurrection and ascension to heaven...And thus also must the Church renew herself, in a spiritual manner, the main circumstances of the life which he lived outwardly. Finding himself in a natural state, the faithful man must die, like Christ, to the natural - but inwardly only, as he outwardly: he must suffer himself to be crucified and buried spiritually, as Christ was bodily, in order that by the removal of the natural state he may be identical with him as Spirit, and be a sharer in Christ's blessedness and dominion.³⁴

From these words we may suppose that Strauss had actually reconstructed a Christology which resembled the belief of the Church in the God-man. But the illusion arising from these fine-sounding words is soon dissipated by the statements which follow. Clarifying his position and, in particular, his point on the unity of the Divine and Human in one historical person, Strauss writes: "Though I can conceive that the Divine Spirit in its exterior and

34. "Life of Jesus", German edition, Vol.II. p.757-761, quoted by Mill, p.26.

condescending manifestation is the Human, and the human spirit in its reflection into itself, and its elevation above itself, is the Divine, yet can I not on that account represent to myself how divine and human nature can have made up the distinct yet connected ingredients of one historical person. Though I see the spirit of humanity in its union with the divine, in the course of the world's history ever more perfect, exert itself as might over nature - yet this is something altogether different from imagining an individual man armed with such might for certain arbitrary transactions. Assuredly, from the truth that the removal of the natural being is the resurrection of the spirit, the bodily resurrection of an individual will never follow."³⁵.

In view of these expressions, we may think that we have come to the point so strongly condemned in the Kantian and De Wettian schools - of seeing only idealities in the Gospel, and leaving nothing for faith to rest on. But our author gravely assures us otherwise: he bids us reflect on the prodigious difference between the future idealities of those dreaming transcendentalists, and the real

35. "Life of Jesus", Vol.I. p.779.

present operative ideas with which his rich diagnosis has furnished us. "What," he says, "shall not the idea of the union of divine and human nature be real in an infinitely higher sense, when I apprehend the whole of humanity as its subject of operation, than when I set apart a particular man - man as such? Is not the incarnation of God from eternity a truer thing, than one in an exclusive point of time?"³⁶. Unfolding in a more direct way his understanding, he comments: "Luther subordinated the physical miracles to the spiritual, as the truly great miracles. And shall we interest ourselves more in the cure of some sick people in Galilee than in the miracles of intellectual and moral life belonging to the history of the world - in the increasing, the almost incredible dominion of man over nature - in the irresistible force of ideas, to which no unintelligent matter, whatever its magnitude, can oppose any enduring resistance? This would be a direct contravention of the more enlightened sentiments of our own day..."³⁷.

The idea, the very essence of Deity, is related to the regions of art and science,

36. Ibid., p.781.

37. Ibid., p.781.

civil and ordinary life, instead of being confined to the mere circle of religion. The crowning statement of his point of view is of such an extraordinary character that it must be quoted in full:

"This is the key to the whole of Christology, that, as subject of the predicate which the Church assigns to Christ, we place, instead of an individual, an idea; but an idea which has an existence in reality, not in the mind only, like that of Kant. In an individual, a God-man, the properties and functions which the Church ascribes to Christ contradict themselves; in the idea of the race they perfectly agree. Humanity is the union of the two natures - God become man, the infinite manifesting itself in the finite, and the finite spirit remembering its infinitude; it is the child of the visible Mother and the invisible Father, Nature and Spirit; it is the worker of miracles, in so far as in the course of human history the spirit more and more completely subjugates nature, both within and around man, until it lies before him as the inert matter on which he exercises his active power; it is the sinless existence, for the course of its

development is a blameless one, pollution cleaves to the individual only, and does not touch the race or its history. It is Humanity that dies, rises and ascends to heaven, for, from the negation of its phenomenal life, there ever proceeds a higher spiritual life; from the suppression of its mortality as a personal, national, and terrestrial spirit, arises its union with the infinite spirit of the heavens. By faith in this Christ, especially in his death and resurrection, man is justified before God; that is, by the kindling within him of the idea of Humanity, the individual man participates in the divinely human life of the species. Now, the main element of that idea is, that the negation of the merely natural and sensual life, which is itself the negation of the spirit, (the negation of negation, therefore,) is the sole way to true spiritual life. This alone is the absolute sense of Christology: That it is annexed to the person and history of one individual, is a necessary result of the historical form which Christology has taken."³⁸. Yet more compendiously is this stated at the end of the section. Strauss

38. Ibid., p.780.

writes: "If we recognise the incarnation, the death, and the resurrection, in which the double negation makes an affirmative, as the eternal cycle, the endless pulse of divine life ever returning into itself, what can be attributed of separate or special import to an individual fact which exhibits this process only in a sensible manner? In the outward fact our age will be conducted merely to the idea, in the individual to the race at large, for its Christology: a dogmatic theology, which, in handling the topic of Christ, rests in him as an individual, is no dogmatic theology but a sermon."³⁹.

VIII. A Critique of Strauss' Christology.

After sketching Strauss' Christological reconstruction - a reconstruction which purported to answer the requirements of faith and science - and after noting especially the Idea of the Gottmenschliches to be the key to his Christology, the relationship between the archetypical historical person of Christ and the God-manhood, or Divine Humanity is forced upon us as a subject of enquiry. If humanity is general, the totality of finite objects is the Son of God, what place and what function

39. Ibid., p.781.

is assigned to the one confessed to be the mediator of the God-manly (Gottmenschliches), or, rather, Divine-human (Gottlichmenschliches) life? What is the relationship between the eternal Incarnation of God and the incarnation in the particular God-man? These questions and the related subject matter suggested demand a fuller explication before Strauss' mythologising scheme can be criticised.

Before inaugurating the inquiry which may, or may not, demonstrate an intelligible relationship between the particular historical God-man and the Ideal Christ (Divine Humanity), it may be emphasised that our author does not doubt the actual historical existence of Jesus. He does not attempt in his first four editions of his "Leben Jesus" to give a positive life of Jesus, but it is assumed that there are certain historical data substantiating this life. Though Strauss did not cast doubt on the historicity of Jesus, his mythical theories and speculative reconstructions did prepare the way for the eventual rejection of the historical Jesus in the writings of Bruno Bauer. Strauss, like Hegel, whom he follows at many points, was not concerned with the phenomenal history of the individual. It was assumed that

the external, sensuous data had been mythically embellished through transmission. Like Hegel, the external fact was a point of departure for the Spirit which knows itself united with God. After the annihilation of the sensuous external and the crude representations (Vorstellung), the entire object of faith is completely shifted; from sensuous and empirical it has become spiritual and divine, and it has its credentials no longer in history, but in Philosophy. Through this passing over the sensible history (the image) to the absolute, the former is abolished as an essential; it is degraded into a subordinate, over which stands spiritual truth on its own proper (independent) ground. Moreover, sensible history is reduced by Strauss to a distant dreamy vision which has its place now only in the past, and not, like the idea, in the spirit ever absolutely present and conversant with it. But, if the history of the mediator performs only a suggestive function to faith and after which this history is to be discarded from view as a bygone dream, what, if any, mediatorial function was exercised by the God-man?

Strauss points to this question when he amplifies a statement in connection with what he has said concerning the key to his Christology. This further clarification, conspicuously suppressed in his later editions, gives some indication of his answer. "This alone is the absolute subject-matter of Christology: the circumstance that this appears bound up in the person and history of an individual has no other subjective ground than this - that the individual in question, by means of his personality and his destiny, became the occasion of bringing that subject-matter into universal consciousness; while the degree of spiritual attainment in the ancient world, and the vulgar, perhaps, of every time, can contemplate the idea of humanity only in the concrete figure of an individual. In a time of the deepest convulsion, of the greatest bodily and mental suffering...the individual in question...became the occasion of bringing the subject-matter into universal consciousness."⁴⁰. This is the function of the God-man. Not that he was distinctively the unique realisation of the unity between God and man, but that with him commenced or was inaugurated a process which each person must

40. Ibid., p.776.

realise in his own life. He does not complete the unity, but merely initiates the turning point in the development of the spirit winning its own reconciliation.

The above is not surprising, for Strauss believed that it was impossible for spirit to manifest itself in a single individual, but only on the whole. The archetypicality of the God-man, because finite forms are always inadequate to the idea, is thereby denied. But this rejection of the finality of the God-man and assigning him a prophetic role instead of a mediatorial function fastens itself on another central idea in the Straussian-Hegelian system, namely the idea of God and the idea of humanity.

Some attention has been given to Strauss' doctrine of God and of God's relationship to history in his Christological reconstruction, but, if we are to comprehend the reasons why Christ or the particular individual God-man could not have been the archetype, the primal man which eternally and equivocally mediates the Gottsmenschliches, we must refer to the Hegelian-Straussian concept of God again. It was observed in the preceding discussion that Strauss agrees with what he calls "the scientific doctrine of God." A doctrine

which, it is remembered, is anti-supernaturalistic, and one which preserves the immutability of the natural order with its laws and freedom from outward interpositions. He says of this scientific picture: "Science has conceived that the infinite has its existence in the alternate production and extinction of the finite; that the idea is realised only in the entire series of its manifestations."⁴¹ This primary statement succinctly represents the cycle which God must pass through in order to arrive at self-consciousness: God, because he does not know himself or have aseity in eternal absoluteness, posits an other; and He alone can know Himself in and through this "Other". When the other (the world, finite forms, nature) has been posited, these finite forms, because they are insufficient and inadequate to mediate God's complete self-knowledge, are abolished and other forms are posited. An ever-ending cycle which does not cease with the positing of any finite form. Commenting on this cyclical process, Dorner writes: "The process required by the Idea of God as the mere Spirit of the world, is marked by the self-contradictory feature, that, in order to its having adequate actuality, it is

41. Ibid., p.777.

compelled on the one hand eternally to posit a non-adequate medium (the world), and on the other hand to do away with the same medium on the ground that it is impossible for God truly and permanently to have his life and abode in any single form."⁴² Through the endless series, or totality of finite spirits, God is arriving at this realisation as a subject. Moreover, regardless of Hegel's and Strauss' efforts to maintain the eternal completeness of God apart from the continuous flux of time, God Himself is in bondage to, and dependent on, the world. He becomes God through the finite series and if, in the endless positing and abolishing process, God realises Himself completely, the history of the world - because that history is none other than the history of God's actualisation - would, by necessity, terminate and stagnate in the completed form.

Several Christological ideas are mirrored in this context. (1) It is the inadequacy of the form to the content, or the image to the Idea, that solicits ever afresh the process of positing new forms and abolishing them. The finite, in particular the individual form, because it is inadequate to the idea and because the idea "does not lavish its fullness on one exemplar"⁴³.

42. Dorner, Person of Christ, p.154.

43. "Life of Jesus"; Vol. I. p.779.

cannot represent the complete, final oneness of God and man. This form may suggest the process but, if it embodies the idea fully, the necessity for the scheme devised to mediate God's self-consciousness would terminate with the fulfillment of the idea. (2) Every spiritual being must, by necessity, pass through the same, or similar, state of division and disruption which we have noted in God. The individual posits his other, vis à vis, nature. Through sin and deicide he breaks with nature and the binding idolatries in order to realise his oneness with God. In so many words, his immediate naturalness must serve as the impetus for the actualisation of his own self-consciousness. On this base, there could not have been a sinless God-man who was exempt from the process. (3) The entire process, God's positing an "other" and returning to Himself, only to posit another "other", is the self-mediation of God. On this reckoning, no place remains for the operation of a historical mediator. (4) On the basis of Hegel's ideas on sin, which we may be sure Strauss adopts, this is implicit in his thought that natural existence was the resurrection of spirit. There was no place for the mediatorial office ascribed to Christ by the Church. The salvation of man is

confined to the Christ persona as exemplary

effected not be Christ's person, but solely by the eternal idea brought to light in, though not bound to, his person. (5) Another point in connection with this endless series of finite forms which serve to mediate God's self-consciousness and which, moreover, prohibits Strauss and Hegel from assigning any particularity or finality to the person of Christ, concerns the abolition of personality in the scheme. None of the manifold forms which are posited have a veritably distinctive spiritual character. Each is inadequate to the idea which it is supposed to convey and only in the totality of forms, Humanity, is there a possibility for the idea to be effectively presented - though there is some question whether even in the numerous forms the idea can be completely fulfilled; for, as we noted, the process has been designed to allow God to arrive at self-knowledge, and, if self-knowledge is complete, the process no longer possesses any value. (6) The Universal God-manhood, or incarnation taught by Strauss and Hegel is neither derived, nor derivable, from Christ or Jesus, the one confessed to be the Christ: it necessarily robs him of his specific position and puts all men on essentially the same level. The one confesses to be Christ performs an exemplary

function at the most in Struass' Christology. He says concerning the Christ:..."every man of moral pre-eminence, every great thinker, who has made the active nature of man the object of his investigation has contributed in a narrower or wider circle towards correcting that idea, perfecting or improving it. And among these improvements of the Ideal of Humanity, Jesus stands at all events in the first class. He introduced features into it which were wanting to it before or had continued undeveloped; reduced the dimension of others which prevented its universal application; imported into it, by the religious aspect which he gave it, a more lofty consecration, and bestowed upon it, by embodying it in his own person."⁴⁴. But, if this remark appears to give a higher place to Jesus than has been allowed in our other interpretations of Strauss' thought, he says in another context that the Idea of the Christ was further developed, and more perfectly finished, in its different features after the historical Jesus.

(7) Another factor in connection with the eternal incarnation and the specific incarnation of God in a particular finite form concerns the agreement which the former idea naturally has with

44. "Life of Jesus", Vol. II. p. 437.

the version that "humanity", the totality of finite forms, is the essence of God, or God Himself. Human history is, after all, the process of God's becoming the self-unfolding of reason under conditions of space and time and, in this sense, but no other, the word became flesh and dwelt among us. Although faith may believe the appearance of the God-man, the incarnation of God, his birth in the flesh, an historical fact, speculative thought considers the incarnation of God in no single event which once happened, but an eternal determination of the essence of God by virtue of which God only in so far becomes man in time (in every individual man) as He is man from eternity. The finitude and humiliation and power which Christ as God-man endured, God at every moment suffers as man. The atonement made by Christ is no temporal performed act, but God reconciling Himself with Himself eternally: and the resurrection and exaltation of Christ is nothing else than the eternal return of the Spirit to Himself and to His truth. Christ as man, as God-man, is man in his universality, not a single individual, but a universal individual."⁴⁵.

While Strauss, along with Hegel, insisted that

45. Fairburn, A.M. "The Place of Christ in Modern Theology", Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1868, page, 265.

at the heart of all finite transactions and historical ones among the rest, individuals stand as "the substantiality of the Idea," Jesus The Christ may not be spoken of as he is pictured and interpreted in the New Testament. In the chapel of the enlightened, Jesus is premier inter paras, standing with Emperor Alexander Severus, Orpheus, Homer, as companions. In his own religious compartment, we may assign to him Moses and Mohammed for his associates.

Concerning Strauss' mythical scheme, we may make the following critique: Strauss' fear of relapsing into the rationalists and naturalistic end, to some extent, the half-mythicist, half-rationalist, reconstruction of the biblical history, led him to enunciate two errors which ultimately vitiated his attempt to escape from the dilemmas posed by the rationalist and supernaturalist view of biblical history.

The first error, that of mythicizing the history or extricating the mythus from their context in the narrative, overlooked the vital connection which the non-historical story has with the preceding and following historical data. Schweitzer illustrates this point in connection with Weisse's discussion of miracles. Instead

46. Schweitzer, Albert, "Quest of the Historical Jesus", page 34.

47. Ibid., p. 34.

of considering the myth or miracle of the feeding of the multitude in the context of the narrative, Strauss proposed to cut away the story from the surrounding probable historical data and regard it as pure myth. While Strauss has sufficiently shown the admixture of myth, legend, and history, in the narrative and, to some extent, so Schweitzer says, "he has shown clearly enough the source of the form of the narrative in question, this does not suffice to explain its origin."⁴⁶ Schweitzer continues: "Doubtless there is mythical material in the story of the feeding of the multitude, but the existence of the story is not explained by referring to the manna in the desert, or the miraculous feeding of a multitude of Elisha. The story in the Gospel has far too much individuality for that, and stands, moreover, in much too closely articulated an historical connection. It must have as its basis some historical fact. It is not myth, though there is myth in it."⁴⁷ Similarly, with the account of the transfiguration, Strauss, instead of considering the possibility that the event was partly based on a real experience shared by the three disciples, chose to overlook its connection with the context by a

46. Schweitzer, Albert, "Quest of the Historical Jesus", page 84.

47. Ibid., p.84.

definite indication of time. Strauss connects the six days in Mark 9:2 with Ex. 24:16 and, furthermore, he seeks to show that the transfiguration narrative was one of the many ways the Jewish Christians proposed to exemplify the splendour of the Messiah. Taking the illumination of the countenance of Moses as a type for the transfiguration of Jesus, the early Church (motivated by a desire to prove the Messiahship of Jesus) sought to exhibit in the life of Jesus an enhanced repetition of the glorification of Moses, and to bring Jesus as the Messiah into contact with his two forerunners. Schweitzer says, in view of Strauss' pure mythical treatment of the narratives, that.. "the substratum of historical fact in the life of Jesus is much more extensive than Strauss is prepared to admit. Sometimes he fails to see the foundations because he proceeds like an explorer who, in working on the ruins of an Assyrian city, should cover up the most valuable evidence with the rubbish thrown out from another portion of the excavations."⁴⁸. Summarily speaking, Strauss eliminates myth in his interpretation. As one ascends from the "image", vis a vis the myth, to the idea or Kerygma, particular historical

48. Ibid., p.84.

events or the context in which the idea appears is eliminated. The ideas (Kerygma) are timeless truths which can be permanently divorced from the context of history. The kernel, viz. the idea of the unity of God and man, can be separated from the husks which surround this unity. With the tools of reason and enlightened philosophy, the mythical, though unconscious, inventions can be seen for what they are: pre-philosophical means of elaborating truth.

Another error in Strauss' mythicizing scheme occurs in his concern to prove that the New Testament mythi arose from the transference of the Old Testament Messianic myths. In the first instance, this simple plan underestimates the vital factors which caused this transference, and, furthermore, Strauss' plan does not entail a discussion of the transformation and re-evaluation of the Old Testament prototypes by the Evangelists and Apostles. The mechanical, static, and, to some extent, plagiaristic, adoption of the Old Testament antitypes, undermines the experience of the early disciples. The Church, instead of being created by Christ as a dialectical response, creates its Christ virtually out of pure imagination.. It then substantiates this creation by scrutinising and comparing its form

with the previous standards, or composing their narratives like a mosaic out of different antitypes in the Old Testament. Christ receives his majesty from the community. He did not, as Christendom has believed in accordance with John 17:22, 1 Cor. 1:18, import his majesty to his disciples. But, if the Church created Christ, we are then left with the query: What created, or who created, the Church? Whom does the author represent as the originator of this revelation in the world? Apparently no-one. The origin of Christianity vanishes into the thickest mist. It is surely not the correspondence in the acts and events of His life with ancient predictions that caused his reception by the ones confessing Him to be their Christ; but it is a presumption, somehow existing independently, that he must be the Christ that united with the recollection of those predictions in the people's minds to make up the story of this accomplishment.

We may legitimately ask why were the expectations attached to Jesus? Recognising the several Messianic expectations elaborated in Jewish history, how were these promises sorted out in the minds of the recipients if we assume,

as Strauss lead us to believe, that the personality of Jesus has such a minimal effect on the narrators of that history?

A related error concerns Strauss' neglect of the influences derived from Gnosticism, Stoicism and mystery religions. Ideas from the surrounding world in the first century moulded the minds of the perpetrators of the tradition and, to a large extent, these syncretistic factors served to transform and to universalise the Messianic expectations. Rather than inaugurate a criticism of the sources and the multitudinous ideas lying at the root of the text, Strauss preferred to validate his mythical claims on the basis of the Old Testament antitypes. If the doctrines could not be found in the Old Testament, they were dismissed.

We have been principally concerned with Strauss' adoption of Hegel's distinction between *Vorstellung* (Image) and *Begriff* (Idea). Strauss' demythologising method was inspired by Hegelian philosophy. His view of myth, history, and Christianity (the Absolute Religion), was determined by his Hegelian presuppositions.

There were other periods in Strauss' writings which we cannot elaborate. Suffice it to say

that in his "Life of Jesus for the German People" in 1864, he chose to give what has been called a "liberal picture of Jesus." The "arbitrary spiritualisation of the Synoptic Jesus"⁴⁹ results, according to Schweitzer, in an "unhistorical man."⁵⁰ Schweitzer comments further on this strange Jesus in Strauss' "Popular Life of 1864": "The ultimate product of this process was expected to be a Jesus who should be essential man; the actual product, however, is Jesus the historical man, a being whose looks and sayings are strange and unfamiliar. Strauss is too purely a critic, too little of the creative historian, to recognise this strange being. That Jesus really lived in a world of Jewish ideas and held Himself to be Messiah in the Jewish sense, is, for the writer of the *Life of Jesus*, an impossibility. The deposit which resists the chemical process for the elimination of myth, he must therefore break up with the hammer."⁵¹

Another period in Strauss' speculative treatment of Christology is to be noted in his work "The Old Faith and the New" which appeared in 1872. He puts to himself the question, What is there of permanence in this artificial compound

49. Ibid., p.198.

50. Ibid., p.199.

51. Ibid., p.197.

of theology and philosophy, faith and thought? The Hegelian system of thought which served as a firm basis for the work of 1840, has fallen in ruins. Strauss, without the crutch afforded by the Hegelian system, endeavours to raise himself above the new scientific world-view enunciated by Darwin and Feubach. In his last work, Strauss addressed himself to several questions, some of which were: "Are we still Christians?" "Have we still a religion?" "How are we to understand the world?" "How are we to regulate our lives?" To the first question, he answers, "No." To the others he attempts in an impersonal way to base his constructions on the scientific theories of Darwin.

In our next chapters we shall develop a pattern of thought which grew out of the Hegelian-Straussian speculations. Beginning with Bruno Bauer, who has the distinction of being one of the first to deny the historicity of Jesus, we shall glance at the Christ-Myth Theorists. Time will not permit an adequate discussion of all the theorists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. We have chosen to give some attention to three figures: Kaustky,

J.M. Robertson, and Jensen, principally because they represent three fields of enquiry into the origins of Christianity - respectively, sociology, comparative mythology and religion, and archaeology.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHRIST-MYTH THEORISTS.Preface.

We will be concerned in this chapter, and in the following chapters in this section, to survey the development of a thesis which was set forward in the early 19th century by Bruno Bauer - namely, the non-existence of Jesus of Nazareth. This thesis was inspired, at least indirectly, by Hegelian philosophy and the biblical criticism of Frederick Strauss. The men who were influenced by Hegelianism in the fields of comparative religion, comparative mythology, sociology and archaeology, sought to free the world from the shackles to which it had allowed the figure of Jesus and the Church's interpretation of this figure to bind them. For these men, the Christian religion was identified with intellectual dishonesty and all the forces of evil in the world. It had been a bar to scientific and moral progress. Moreover, the Jesus of history, or the Orthodox interpretation of Christianity, because it depended upon an outmoded world view- entailing a belief in the supernatural, miracles and

revelation - encouraged a conservative view of the social order. It is the opinion of the men we shall study, and others which cannot be examined within the limits of our essay, that the origin of the Christian movement could be understood apart from the outstanding personality of Jesus of Nazareth.

But, it must be said in their favour, that some of these writers did not initially question the historical existence of Jesus. Only when their efforts to reanimate Christianity, or when their theories made Jesus' existence untenable and ridiculous, did they deny the historicity of Jesus - at least this is true in some of the 19th century denials. Another feature in their favour concerns their contribution to the study of the life of Jesus and the uncovering of many problems connected with the study of the New Testament. Schweitzer admirably summarises this point in his concluding remarks on Bruno Bauer. He writes: "Bauer's 'Criticism of the Gospel History' is worth a good dozen Lives of Jesus, because his work, as we are only now coming to recognise, after a half century, is the ablest and most complete collection of the difficulties of the life of Jesus which is anywhere to be

found."¹. Then the work of the Christ-myth theorists, in emphasizing the parallels, actual or alleged, to the traditions concerning Jesus, enabled sympathetic scholars to grapple with many strands in the New Testament which had been ignored or given inadequate treatment. Another contribution offered to biblical criticism by these extremists lay in their emphasis on one or another factor which had been improperly recognized by Christian interpreters. Kautsky and Kalthoff emphasized the first century social ferment and how such social uprisings should be considered in connection with the rise and propagation of the Christian message. Bauer and Robertson, Drews and Smith, emphasized the philosophical thought in the first century, including the various religious movements and how they influenced the terminology and arguments of the New Testament writers. Another contribution of these men to biblical exegesis concerns their historical scepticism about the purpose of the New Testament witness. That is to say, from a prejudiced point of view, some of these men, notably the myth-theorists in the early twentieth century, sought to show the non-biographical interest of the New Testament Evangelists. While

1. Schweitzer, Albert, "The Quest of the Historical Jesus," page 159.

we would question W.B. Smith's idea of the "humanised Deity" which meets us in the New Testament, he was correct in saying that there was not a point in the New Testament witness when Christ was considered a "mere man." While the "liberals" were trying to resurrect the "factual" Jesus behind the New Testament witness, these men were engaged in an investigation of the symbolism in the New Testament, though these symbols were, for the most part, considered extra-biblical by these myth-theorists .

The main contention of these chapters is, that the early Christ-myth controversy in Bruno Bauer and the modern Christ-myth arguments initiated by Kautsky, Robertson, Jensen, Drews and W.B. Smith, owed their inspiration to a conflict between the Idea and the historical which was inaugurated by Hegel and Strauss. These men, (post-Hegelians), were, for the most part, monists or pantheists. For them, reality consists of a single all-inclusive process and God is immanent within it, and not in any sense outside and beyond it. To attach special significance to an incarnation in Jesus is to obscure the truth that God is present in every man and in all

nature and all history. The truth contained in the Christian doctrine of redemption may be defined as follows: The life of the world is God's life: the development of humanity, full of conflict and suffering, is the history of a divine struggle and passion: the process of the world is the process of a God who in each individual creature, strives, suffers, conquers and dies, in order to overcome in the religious consciousness of man the limits of finiteness, and anticipate his future triumphs over all the suffering of the world. The chief obstacle to the acceptance of this point of view is the belief in the historic actuality of a unique and unsurpassed personal Redeemer. So Kautsky, Robertson, Jensen, and their colleagues, who shared this religious philosophy, set out to destroy this hindrance.

Much of what follows is an account of the origin of the Christian Gospel when the personality of Jesus has been denied. Why were these men chosen and not others? Obviously answered: time does not permit a full analysis of all points of view. Only the representative ones can be surveyed. We have chosen, beyond our brief summary of Bauer's account in this chapter,

a representative from three fields of study: Kautsky from the socio-religious; J.M. Robertson from the sphere of comparative religion and mythology; and Jensen from the field of Archaeology. The primary guide, or central presupposition, of all these men is illustrated by J.M. Robertson in his "Pagan Christs". Mr. Robertson writes: "It is needless here to challenge afresh the historical value of the conflicting records, wherein a slight detail, of no historical importance, enters only to take varying forms for symbolical reasons. What we are concerned with is the source of the symbolism."² In so many words, these men did not look to the New Testament narratives for the historical facts, but to the ideas (their own presuppositions) to explain the origin of the narrative. In each of the Christ-myth theorists, it is their ideas on the origin of Christianity which determines how the facts are to be interpreted. One interpretor of these myth theories says: "Before we examine the case for the Christ myth, it may be worthwhile to observe that it does not appear to convince anyone unless he comes to the inquiry with certain presuppositions. Doubts regarding

2. Robertson, J.M. "Pagan Christs", page 120.

the historical existence of Jesus Christ are advanced only by persons who wish to establish preconceived ideas as to the nature of religion, or as to the nature of history."³.

The following survey does not pretend to be an adequate appraisal of the various theories, nor does it presume to evaluate these theories in any detail. This evaluative task has been done by many theologians. I should suggest several books which perform this function: Thorburn, T.J. "Jesus the Christ, Historical or Mythical", "A reply to Professor Drew's Die Christusmythe" (1912): Wood, H.G. "Did Christ Really Live" (1938): Carpenter, Estlin, "The Historical Jesus and the Theological Christ" (1911): Thorburn, T.J. "The Mythical Interpretation of the Gospels" (1916): Goguel, M. "Jesus the Nazarene, Myth or History" (1925): Loofs, Frederick, "What is the Truth about Jesus Christ" (1913): Mill, W.H. "Observations on the Attempted Application of Pantheistic Principles to the Theory and Historic Criticism of the Gospel" (1861): Beard, J.R. "Voices of the Church in Reply ot D.F. Strauss" (1845): Mackay, R.W. "The Tubingen School and its Antecedents" (1863): Guignebert, Ch. "Jesus" (1935): - to name only a few.

3. Wood, H.G. "Did Christ Really Live", p.17.

1. Bruno Bauer: Christus und die Casaren. Der Ursprung des Christentums aus dem romischen Griechentum.^{1.}

The writings of Bruno Bauer, principally because he was the first German theologian in the 19th century to question and eventually deny the historical existence of Jesus, have an importance which must be estimated before later attempts at negating the reality of Jesus can be described. Bauer laid the germs for the eventual denial of the historical Jesus in such men as Kautsky, Kalthoff, J.M. Robertson, W.B. Smith and Jensen, though the latter never acknowledge their indebtedness to Bauer's speculations. Along with these men, Bauer's negation of the personality of Jesus forced him to account for the rise and propagation of the Christian movement on extra-scriptural grounds. We shall sketch Bauer's account of the origin of the Christian Faith, but, meanwhile, some attention should be given to his reasons for arriving at his negative picture.

Standing on the Hegelian right, occupying, at least initially, a more conservative position than Strauss and the other "leftist" Hegelians,

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1. Christ and the Caesars: How Christianity originated from Graeco-Roman Civilization - (Schweitzer's chapter on "Bruno Bauer" in his "Quest of the Historical Jesus" is a closely packed summary of Bauer's thought).

Bauer was, at least in his initial enquiries, interested in describing Jesus' unique personality and discovering how the artistic and pictorial construction of Jesus' life in the Gospels was capable of awakening the Messianic Idea, and, moreover, how, in the work and teachings of Jesus, mankind, through the centuries, had experienced redemption from bondage to the world. But, as Bauer's investigations of the life of Jesus proceeded, his conclusions became more radical and his judgments more ill-tempered. The Personality of the God-man, traditionally conceived as realizable in a single person, was soon to mean for Bauer a realisation of the Divinity of Humanity. Moreover, Jesus of Nazareth never lived and there was no cause for Christendom to refer to Him as the unique embodiment of Divinity. What are the lines upon which Bauer finally reached his negative conclusion?

In approaching his investigation of the Gospel history, Bauer saw two paths open to him. He might choose the historical method which would lead him to discover how the Jewish Messianic conception became attached to Jesus. Or, he could take the literary approach which would

lead him to examine the Gospel texts and ascertain, on the basis of the material in the New Testament, the way in which the Evangelists speak of Jesus and his work. In his literary solution, the New Testament could be divorced from the literature which preceded the writings, e.g. the Old Testament and the inter-testament period. Moreover, instead of beginning his investigation of the life of Jesus from the recognized initial sources, the synoptic parallels (a position which, while being accepted in part by Strauss, and further substantiated in the Marcan hypothesis in the writings of Weisse and Wilke), Bauer began his study by examining the Gospel of John. Discovering this Gospel to be a work of art, e.g. the reflective thought of the author fitting the concept of the Jewish Messiah into the framework of the Logos conception, Bauer surmised that the reflective and creative imagination of the author of the Gospel of John did not presume to write a biographical account of the life of Jesus. Upon the supposition of a literary origin of the Fourth Gospel, Bauer turns to the synoptic parallels to discover in them the historical framework of the life of Jesus. Before his explanation of the historicity and unity

of these parallels proceeded on the basis of the plan of the second Gospel, Wilke and Weisse had decided on the priority of the Marcan Gospel. In the so-called Marcan hypothesis, these writers had concluded that Matthew and Luke freely used Mark in their expositions. Where these two gospels differ from Mark, it was believed that oral and written tradition had supplemented their sketches of the life of Jesus and his ministry. The three Gospels drew upon tradition and were simply literary versions of a tradition widely circulated in the period. While allowing for the priority of Mark and the general historical value of the outline of Jesus' life, Weisse and Wilke, according to Schweitzer, "had not suspected how great a danger arises when, of the three witnesses who represent the tradition, only one is allowed to stand, and the tradition is recognized and allowed to exist in the one written form only...Will a single one bear the strain?"². The question of the purely literary origin did not occur to Weisse and Wilke, for they continued to combine with Mark the wider hypothesis of a general tradition. And, further, these writers believed

2. Schweitzer, Albert, "The Quest of the Historical Jesus", page 140.

that Matthew and Luke used the collection of "Logia" (written tradition) and also owed parts of their supplementary matter to a free use of floating tradition.

But, if traditional material, oral and written, was allowed, the purely inventive, literary origin of the parallels could not be permitted. Bauer was not content with this thesis as it stood and, on the basis of his emendation, we may discover the initial ground for his contention that there was not an historical person named Jesus who was confessed to be the Christ. The question posed by Bauer : "How was he to show that the life of Jesus was derived from a single source, i.e., the Gospel of Mark?" Furthermore, "how was he to disprove the existence of a composite source which was freely utilised by other Evangelists, even the author of the second Gospel?" Bauer's central point, one which he attempts to substantiate by a careful reading of the additional material in Matthew and Luke, concerns the literary development of certain fundamental ideas and suggestions found by these composers in the Gospel of Mark. The Marcan hypothesis takes the following form in the writings of Bauer. Our knowledge of the Gospel

History does not rest upon any basis of tradition, but only upon three literary works. Two of these are not independent, being merely expansions of the first, and the third, Matthew, is also dependent upon the second. Consequently, there is no tradition of the Gospel history, but only a single literary source.

How does Bauer account for the point which had been made in biblical criticism up to his time, namely, the common knowledge of Jesus before it became fixed in the New Testament writings.

Strauss and the supernaturalist, i.e.

Hengstenberg, claimed that the life of Jesus was the living embodiment of the Old Testament picture of the Messiah. And, moreover, the claim and traditional belief that the New Testament Messiah was the fulfillment of one of the Messianic expectations implicit and explicit in some parts of the Old Testament.

First, Bauer denies that at the time of Jesus there was a general expectation of the Messiah. The folk stories or myths which Strauss had emphasised as being common knowledge among the Jewish people, were now, for Bauer, non-existent. Accordingly, the Jews had no Messianic hope at all and no belief in a "King of the Jews"

that should come. Such traits, therefore, could not have been transferred to Jesus. The reflective, creative conception of the Messiah was not taken over ready-made from Judaism; That dogma first arose along with the Christian community, or, rather, the moment in which it arose was the same in which the Christian community had its birth. Internal criticism of the synoptic parallels convinced Bauer, according to Schweitzer, that the conception of myth and legend of which Strauss had made use, is much too vague to explain the deliberate transformation of a personality. In the place of myth Bauer, therefore, sets "reflection". The life which pulses in the Gospel History is too vigorous to be explained as created by legend; it is a real experience, only not the experience of Jesus, but of the Church. The representation of this experience of the Church in the life of a Person is not the work of a number of men, but of a single author. The events in the Gospel, e.g., the temptation, the mission of the twelve, passion, are real circumstances, genuine struggles and sufferings, but not the circumstance of one man or the experience of twelve men.

Three ideas have emerged in our brief survey of

Bauer's thought. The denial of the Messianic expectations and its origin in the community; the inventive history of the single Evangelist which attached first century ideas to a precise historical person; and the real experiences of the community which were grouped around a single personality in the synoptic parallels. Internally, Bauer's literary hypothesis had performed its negative work.

Before we can offer some critique of this internal solution, let us glance at the external evidence which he amassed for the negation of the historical Jesus. The external evidence which Bauer uncovers is repeated in every writing which purposes to question the historicity of Jesus. The first evidence concerns the silence in profane literature of the time of Jesus. Such early Roman writers as Tacitus and Suetonius, while referring to Jesus in a scanty way, cannot be depended upon for any valid information. The first definite record of Christianity is given in one of the letters of Pliny, who was Governor in Bithynia from 111 to 113 A.D., and already, at that time, found Christians living there in large numbers.

If these records of Jesus in secular literature, even in the Jewish historian Josephus, could be

proven to have been reactions and interpolations placed there by the Christians - Bauer and other Myth theorists were of this opinion - the absence of data in the literature of the period went far to prove the non-existence of Jesus. These men did not stop to consider the reasons why Josephus failed to mention the Messianic uprisings in Palestine. Writing for the Romans, Josephus wished to show these people the law-abiding character and peaceableness of his countrymen. To sketch the claims of Jesus, as they were being understood in Palestine in the period, would have defeated Josephus' purpose.

The second fact which Bauer and others drew upon to support the negation of Jesus, involves the ideas which were considered of a distinctive Christian origin - being found almost word for word in the writings of the heathens of that age. Many of the writers of the period had spoken of brotherhood, providence, peace and faithfulness under suffering. Ideas originating in Stoicism and neo-Platonism were to be found reduplicated in the teachings of Jesus. The mystery religions which magnified redemption and release from the world into a higher, purified, spiritual state, preceded the thoughts of Jesus. Jesus

did not initiate many of the ideas attributed to him by the Christians: on the contrary, they were ready-to-hand, and, to some extent, borrowed and represented in the writings of the Christians as new.

Another fact which the Christ-myth theorists drew upon to substantiate their thesis, was the contradictory nature of the sources in the New Testament. On the basis of these contradictions, they assumed that these sources were not trustworthy. This point, coupled with the silence in non-Christian literature, and the parallel ideas in other religions, constituted the primary case against the historicity of Jesus. Each myth-theorist begins to trace the rise and propagation of the Christian message with these three factors in the background.

Turning now to Bauer's internal criticism of the Gospel record: His case on this level concerned the absence of any Messianic considerations prior to the Gospel account. Instead of being taken over from Judaism and woven into the aspects of the Gospel which Jesus exemplified, the Messianic conceptions first arose with the Christian community, or, rather, the

Ueber die Ursprung der Idee, Jesus Christus als Messias zu betrachten, in Bauer's Werk, "Christenheit und ihre Gesetze. Der Ursprung des Christentums und des weltlichen Christentums", 1873.

moment in which these conceptions arose, was the same in which the Christian community had its birth. Relative to this absence of Messianic speculations, was the non-existence of any traditional material in the Gospel of Mark. Mark, according to Bauer, was an artistic unity, the offspring of a single mind. According to Schweitzer, Bauer's position on the artistic unity of Mark cannot stand when he is forced to recognise diverst accounts of an event in the one Gospel. But, Bauer does not come to grips with the obvious fact that there must have been, in spite of his interpolative theory, a weaving in of fragments of tradition by the author of the second Gospel.

2. Bauer's view of the rise of Christianity.

The question arises: "If Bauer is convinced of the non-existence of the figure of Jesus, how does he account for the Christian movement?" What motive or motives inspired such a movement in the first century? First, Bauer felt compelled, in view of the complexities of the problem offered by the life of Jesus, to go outside the confines of verifiable history for his solution to the problem of the Gospel Jesus. He postulates an original Evangelist who invents the history - an invention to serve an idea. Bauer's book, "Christus und die Casaren. Der Ursprung des Christentums aus dem romischen Criechentum", 1877,

(Christ and the Caesars; How Christianity originated from Graeco-Roman Civilization) is concerned with the question posed. Christianity was a hybrid religion, compounded out of two personalities, Seneca and Josephus, and the ideas which these two men magnified in their teachings and writings. The spirit of the new religion came from the West and the outward frame was furnished by Judaism. In brief, the spirit of the religion is concerned with the alienation of the self from the world through Roman oppression and totalitarianism. At the point of estrangement, the spiritual history (hidden and veiled from the outward history of the world) experienced an alienation from itself and the world - a world which must be conquered if the self is to know of its freedom from the world and nature. In this spirit of resignation, produced by certain ideological forces, Josephus prepared the way for a new principle, namely, in the Jewish break with narrow nationalism and its claim that its God would take possession of the world and make the empire submit to His law - the new principle of universalism could flourish. Herein lay the possibility in the ancient world: the self alienated from the world, resigned to

this state, and the possible victory over the world through active resistance to the world. But this dialectic of alienation and reconciliation to the world was petrified in Christianity. In the first instance, Christianity attached supreme significance to one individual, vis a vis, Jesus of Nazareth - the one who had in his person overcome the world. The Christian faith, through its emphasis on the imitation of this Jesus, has smothered the strength of mankind. In its absolute interest in one person, the Christian religion negated the energy of the world in postulating the figure of Jesus as the central one to be imitated. In this scheme of things, according to Bauer, the self remains alienated as long as it believes Jesus to have been the central religious figure. When it is recognized that Jesus is a creation of mankind in an age of resignation, then the self may arise from this position of servitude.

Secondly, when the figure of Jesus dies for mankind, it becomes possible for it to come to a knowledge of itself and its central vocation, namely that of obtaining victory over the world. When the Christ of the Gospels, the magnified ego, relinquishes his hold on mankind, the latter may

arrive at the consciousness that it is Divine.

The preceding paragraphs are the merest sketch of Bauer's thought and they do not pretend to be adequate, nor do they presume to elucidate all the subtleties in his thought. Bauer, the critic, in the process of his investigations, gave way to Bauer the speculative philosopher. His enquiries were initiated on the basis of a search for the historical in Christianity. His conclusions were, because of the method adopted, implicit in his initial criticisms. In the final analysis, the Gospel History is an imaginary embodiment of a set of exalted ideas. These ideas were the only historical reality from first to last.

We have seen in these paragraphs one attempt to account for the origin of Christianity. As we move into the other chapters in this section, the men, though their writings were some seventyfive years later than Bauer's, will be concerned with the origin of the Christian message. The next representative, Karl Kautsky, wrote his book "Foundations of Christianity: A study in Christian Origins", in 1925. He is, as we have intimated, writing from the point of view of sociology, seeking to align his social views with the rise

CHAPTER IV.

Karl Huxley's Socio-Religious Re-construction

of Christianity. J.M. Robertson's "Pagan Christs: Studies in Comparative Hierology" (1911) and "Christianity and Mythology" (1910) were, as the title of the latter book suggests, concerned to elaborate his view of the origin of Christianity along lines set by a comparative study of religions. P. Jensen's "Das Gilgamesch-Epos in Der Weltliteratur" (1906) is a comparative-archeological study of the origin of the Christian faith. In the following pages these theories of the origin of Christianity will be described.

the Historical Jesus", Segal's "Jesus the Nazarene: Myth of History" and Gutzmer's "Jesus", have ably summarized Kalthoff's theories, we shall look to Kalthoff as the spokesman for that might be termed the socio-religious or Marxist reconstruction of the origins of the Christian faith. Whilst Kalthoff and Kalthoff and their pupils, Marx and Engels, were not concerned to investigate the meaning of the mythical or to discuss the personality of the one confessed to be Jesus the Christ, they were, in face of their spirit's ideas, i.e. the materialistic concepts of history and the consequent invalidation of the individual, and for such theories as to religious experiences concerning religion to be an explicit mark for the elaboration of social ideas, steering on the

CHAPTER IV.

Karl Kautsky's Socio-Religious Reconstruction
of the Origins of the Christian Faith.

1. Introduction:

Karl Kautsky's "Foundations of Christianity: A Study in Christian Origins" is representative of a view of the beginnings of Christianity usually associated with the thought of Professor Kalthoff (Das Christus-Problem: Grundlinien zu einer Socialtheologie). Because the latter's point of view is usually discussed by writers in this field and because such books as Schweitzer's "Quest of the Historical Jesus", Goguel's "Jesus the Nazarene: Myth of History" and Guignebert's "Jesus", have ably summarised Kalthoff's theories, we shall look to Kautsky as the spokesman for what might be termed the socio-religious or Marxist reconstruction of the origins of the Christian faith. Whilst Kautsky and Kalthoff and their tutors, Marx and Engels, were not concerned to investigate the meaning of the mythical or to discuss the personality of the one confessed to be Jesus the Christ, they were, in face of their apriori ideas, i.e. materialistic conception of history and the consequent invalidation of the individual, and conceiving religion to be an expedient husk for the elaboration of social ideas, erecting on the

empirical evidence discerned in the New Testament and the social patterns of the Graeco-Roman world, the myth of a "secularised Christ" - the ideal personification of the impoverished classes in the first century. For these interpreters, their materialistic conception of history made no place for the individual and, if not for the individual, the Christian faith could be explained without reference to the personality of Jesus. "We may add," according to Kautsky, "that it is really not necessary to know anything about him (Jesus). There is not a single Christian thought that requires the assumption of a sublime prophet and superman to explain its origin, not one thought that cannot be pointed out before the time of Jesus in 'pagan' and 'Jewish' literature."¹.

While not expressly denying the existence - "whether he actually existed or was merely an ideal figure of man's visions"². - Kautsky does not decide. The following statements indicate why his thought must be studied in connection with the Christ-myth theories. He writes:

"While we may perhaps go so far as to admit the probability that Jesus lived and was crucified, probably because of an attempted insurrection,

1. Kautsky, Karl, "Foundations of Christianity" - p. 326.

2. Ibid., p.364.

there is practically nothing else that can be said about him. What is regarded as his teaching has no little evidence to support it, is so contradictory and so little original, so full of commonplace moral axioms then current in the mouths of many, that not the slightest trace can be assigned with certainty to the actual teachings of Jesus."³ He continues in another context: "It was not the faith in the resurrection of the crucified which created the Christian congregation and gave it its strength, but, on the contrary, it was the vigour and strength of the congregation that created the belief in the continual life of the Messiah."⁴

2. Kautsky's Interpretation of History.

The remarks, by way of introducing Kautsky's thought, serve to classify him with the Christ-myth advocates. The relationship between Jesus and the faith of the congregation must be discussed in another connection, but, meanwhile, to use Guigenbert's words... "it is evident that, if the personality and influence of Jesus disappear from history, the birth of Christianity has still to be explained."⁵ How does Kautsky set about his task after he has dealt what he considers to

3. Ibid., p.442.

4. Ibid., p.378.

5. Guigenbert, "Jesus", p.55.

be a fatal blow to its central personality, called by him in one context "a proletarian seditionist".⁶ To answer this query, Kautsky's view of history, his ideas on the function of religion, the manner in which he accounts for the beginnings of the Christian faith on the basis of the analogies existing in the development of faith in later Christian sects and similar organizations and his central hypothesis concerning Christianity being a movement of the proletarians of the Graeco-Roman world, different in degree but not in kind, with many of the revolutionary activities in the first and second centuries.

Kautsky's understanding of the Marxist view of history may represent what might be termed an "inverted Hegelianism". Instead of the "notion" or "Begriff" being the factor which by necessity resolves itself in history, now, under the tutelage of Marx and Engels, matter, the processes of production, determine the course of history. Kautsky writes in his introduction concerning the task of science. "For the task of Science is not simply a presentation of that which is, giving a faithful photograph of reality, so that any normally constituted observer will

6. Kautsky, "Foundations of Christianity", p.402.

form the same image. The task of science consists in observing the general, essential element in the mass of impressions and phenomena received, and thus providing a clue by means of which we can find our bearings in the labyrinth of reality."⁷ The clue which performs this all-embracing reference point is summarised in the preface to the English edition of "The Communist Manifesto". Engels writes: "The manifesto being our joint production (Marx and Engels), I consider myself bound to state the fundamental proposition which forms its nucleus, belongs to Marx, that proposition is: That in every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organisation necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that consequently the whole history of mankind (since the dissolution of primitive tribal society, holding land in common ownership) has been a history of class struggles, contest between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes; that the history of these class struggles forms a series of evolutions

7. Ibid., p.12.

in which, nowadays, a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed class - the proletariat - cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of exploiting and ruling class - the bourgeoisie - without, at the same time, and once and for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinction and class struggles."⁸.

The materialistic conception of history, unlike the ideological or "individualistic theory of history", which Kautsky considers to be cyclical in nature - history returning to its initial point, an eternal repetition of the same drama, with only costumes changed, and with no real advancement for humanity,⁹ is, in essence, linear, advancing from one cause to an effect, from one mode of production and consumption in an epoch to a higher one in another era. This materialistic, linear conception of history, gives rise to a dynamic dialectical process which consummates in some classless, non-exploitative society. "The economic history of man shows a continuous evolution from lower to higher forms, which is, however, by no means uninterrupted or uniform in direction. But, once we have investigated the economic conditions

8. Quoted by : Macintyre, Alasdair, "Marxism: An Interpretation", p. 72.

9. Kautsky, p. 11.

of human beings in the various historical periods, we are freed at once from the illusion of an eternal recurrence of the same ideas, aspirations, and political institutions.....

"Once we have ceased to regard political struggles as mere conflicts concerning abstract ideas or political institutions, and have revealed their economic basis, we are ready to understand that, in this field, as well as in that of technology and the mode of production, a constant evolution toward new forms is going on, that no epoch completely resembles any other epoch, that the same slogans and the same arguments may at various times have very different meanings."¹⁰.

With the knowledge that each age of history is to be studied and evaluated in the light of the modes of production and consumption characteristic of the epoch, the proletarian investigator, so Kautsky informs us, is free from biases and class interests and the temptation to reconstruct the past in the light of the present needs and circumstances - prejudices which govern the Bourgeoisie historians. The view of history which Kautsky espouses will, according to him, more easily grasp those phases of primitive

10. Ibid., p. 11-12.

Christianity which they have in common with the modern proletarian movement. The emphasis placed on economic conditions, which is the necessary corollary of the materialistic conception of history, preserves us, so Kautsky claims, from the danger of forgetting the peculiar character of the ancient proletariat merely because we grasp the common element in both epochs. "The characteristics of the ancient proletariat were due to its peculiar economic position, which, in spite of many resemblances, nevertheless made its aspirations entirely different from those of the modern proletariat."¹¹ Kautsky comments further in the same vein when he writes: "He who accepts the standpoint of the economic conception of history can adopt a completely unprejudiced view of the past, even though he is actively involved in the practical struggles of the present. His work can only sharpen his glance for many phenomena of the past, not render it dim."¹²

The Marxist claim to stand beyond the biases and presuppositions which govern "ideological" interpretations of history, is, besides overlooking their own ideological key to history,

11. Ibid., p.12.

12. Ibid., p.14.

anti-personalistic. Marxism repudiates the conception of personal responsibility as a mere "ideology", and considers man as the product of his conditions. Marx says in his introduction to "Capital": "Inasmuch as I conceive the development of the economic structure of society to be a natural process, I should be the last to hold the individual responsible for conditions whose creature he himself is; socially considered, however, he may raise himself above them subjectively."¹³.

A word from Kalthoff's "Rise of Christianity" illustrates the point of view held in common and applied to religion. "The value of either religious or ethical ideas is far higher when they are conceived as a constructive product of the organic development of a certain culture than when, as is done in the individualistic theory of history, they are regarded as the personal contribution of a single genius."¹⁴.

Kautsky offers conclusive evidence for this viewpoint in his own words: "Individual persons may influence society, and the delineation of prominent individuals is indispensable for a complete picture of their times. But, when measured by historical epochs, their influence

13. Thomas, M.M. "The Church and the Disorder of Society" Ecumenical Study, S.C.M. Press, London, 1948, page, 74.

14. Kalthoff, "Rise of Christianity", quoted by Warnshaier, "Jesus or Christ", page, 34.

is temporary at best, furnishes only the surface adornments which, while they may be the first portion of the structure that strikes the eye, reveal nothing to us concerning its foundation walls. It is the latter that determine the character and permanence of the structure. If we can reveal them, we have accomplished the most important work in an understanding of the edifice."¹⁵.

Given such a theory of the way in which the rise of religious and ethical ideas ought to be conceived - a theory which seeks to reduce the share of the individual in the shaping of history to a minimum - it is easy to see how the events of history will have to be brought into conformity with a philosophical system; not how things have happened, but how they must have happened, becomes henceforth the preoccupation of the theorist.

This freedom from interest in any one interpretation of the past and the pretentious claim to transcend all class interests and the absence of any concern for personal responsible existence are enough to vitiate and distort the primary ideas in the Christian message. Kautsky's

15. Kautsky, p. 43.

case for an unprejudicial account of the beginnings of Christianity and his anti-Christian biases falls on the rocks of his unhistorical treatment of the sources and his deterministic view of historical events. Kautsky does not engage in an historical and literary criticism of the New Testament sources. His information of the origins of the Christian movement is deduced from the behaviour of later Christian sects. These later sectarian groups furnish an analogy to the unknown beginnings of Christianity. That a similar sequence of events took place in the later Christian congregations affords, according to Kautsky, a rational, scientific principle for accounting for the rise of Christianity. But, yet another point determines his treatment of Christianity in connection with the principle of historical analogy: He writes: "To be sure, such an argument by analogy does not constitute evidence in itself alone, but it may very well give support to a hypothesis that has been formed in another way. Both these elements, the analogy of the later sects, as well as the actually preserved remnants of the earliest tradition of

19. Ibid., p.327.

20. Ibid., p.462.

primitive Christian life, are equally definite as evidence which might reasonably have expected in advance, knowing the proletarian character of the congregations."¹⁶.

The proletarian character of the era in which Christianity arose is the central thesis of Kautsky's "Foundations of Christianity". He indicates the source of this inspiration when he quotes Engels in connection with his own tracing of the similarities existing between Christianity and socialism. Engels writes in "Class Struggles in France" - "The History of primitive Christianity presents remarkable coincidences with the modern worker's movement, Like the latter, Christianity was originally a movement of the oppressed; it first appeared as a religion of slaves and freedman, of the poor, the outcasts, of the peoples subjected or dispersed by Rome. Both Christianity and Socialism preach an approaching redemption from servitude and misery. Christianity assigns this redemption to a future life in heaven after death; socialism would attain it in this world as a transformation of society."¹⁷.

16. Ibid., p.327.

17. Ibid., p.462.

While Kautsky regards Christianity as "The precipitation of certain class interests" and a product of the economic and moral decay of the proletariat in the Roman Empire, the movement, at least at its inception, was an "envelope for social goals." The liberation from misery proclaimed by Christianity was at first quite material to be realised on this earth, not in Heaven. While at first being a genuine revolutionary product of the poor Galilean fishermen and peasants and Jerusalem proletarians, fired with the Messianic expectations of the Jews and the revolutionary upheavals of the era, Christianity soon became, under the aegis of the state in the fourth century, a powerful legal organisation. Attaining the status of religio licita, becoming a state Church, the movement became a tool of despotism and exploitation, "more powerful and more gigantic than any that have yet appeared in history." It became "a prop of suppression and exploitation; that it not only did not eliminate the imperial power, slavery, the poverty of the masses, and the concentration of wealth in a few hands, but perpetuated these conditions. The Christian

organization, the Church, attained victory by surrendering its original aims and defending their opposite."¹⁸. Yet, there was a time, and Kautsky is convinced that the later Christian editors in the interests of peaceful co-existence with the State and vested interest did not extract all of the evidence of the nature of early Christianity, when Christianity was an insurrectionist, revolutionary movement aspiring to a material salvation on earth. The arrest, trial and execution of Jesus, however much later editors attempted to whitewash the real event, can be understood only if Jesus was the leader of an unsuccessful insurrection. "The assumption that the execution of Jesus was due to the fact that he was a rebel is, therefore, not only the sole assumption which can make the indications in the Gospels clear, but it is also completely in accordance with the character of the epoch and of the locality. From the time to which Jesus' death is commonly assigned, up to the destruction of Jerusalem, there was no end of restlessness in that city. Street fights were a very common thing, as well as executions of individual insurgents. Such a street fight waged by a little group of proletarians, followed by the crucifixion

18. Ibid., p.461.

of its ringleader, who was a native of Galilee, always a rebellious province, might well indeed have made a profound impression on all the participants who survived, while history itself might perhaps not have taken the trouble to record such an every-day event. In view of the rebellious agitation in which the entire Jewish race was living at that period, it was natural for the sect which had brought about this attempted insurrection to emphasise it for purposes of propaganda, thus giving it a firm place in tradition and, also, naturally, somewhat exaggerating and adorning such details as the personality of the hero."¹⁹. But the character of the Christian movement soon was forced to alter its rebellious nature during what Kautsky calls the "Golden Era" of the Roman Empire. During this era, from Vespasian (69 A.D.) to Commodus (180 A.D.), a general condition of internal peace was effected. "Under Vespasian's reign, the military monarchy finally achieved the financial arrangement that was needed by the Emperor in order to preclude in advance any activity of a possible rival in wooing the favour of the soldiers and thus for a long period to stop military rebellions at their source."²⁰. Political revolution, formerly the

19. Ibid., p.369.

20. Ibid., p.370.

natural thing, now became most unnatural, Submission to the imperial power, patient obedience, now seemed not only a commandment of wisdom to the cowardly but became more and more deep-rooted as a moral obligation.

This change in the political and economic fortune of the masses naturally had its effect on the Christian congregation. In Kautsky's own words, a picture is presented of the change which was effected by the new processes of production. "The Christian congregation no longer had any use for the rebellious Messiah, who had been acceptable to Jewish thought. Even the moral feeling of the congregation rebelled against this rebellious Messiah. But, as the congregation had become accustomed to regard Jesus as its God, as the incorporation of all the virtues, the transformation did not involve a relinquishment of the rebellious Jesus and the substitution of an ideal image of another personality, more adapted to the new conditions, but simply meant a gradual elimination of all rebellious elements from the image of the Jesus God, thus transforming the aggressively rebellious Jesus gradually into a passive figure, who had been murdered not because of an insurrection but simply because of his

infinite goodness and sanctity, and the viciousness and malice of treacherous enviers."²¹.

But, while the retouching and editing were carried out in the interests of the Church's position in a sympathetic world, i.e. legalised property holder, representing their Messiah as opposed to all bloodshed, Kautsky, in the interests of his overall theory of Christian origins, is convinced that the Church was initially concerned with salvation on earth, and that only when the economic conditions changed did the Christians transfer salvation to another world.

While the basis for Kautsky's primary thesis, as he finds it mirrored in the New Testament sources, demands further explication, the above comments concerning the role of Christianity and religion in his thinking merit further consideration. As we are primarily concerned with his treatment of Christianity and, in particular, his impugning of the personality of Jesus, his ideas on the function of religion will bring in focus some of the prejudices which he brings to bear on the theme.

It is recognised that Marx postulated a dual role for religion. In a class society, religion

21. Ibid., p.370.

performs two essential functions - it buttresses the established order by sanctifying it and by suggesting that the political order is ordained by God, and it consoles the oppressed and the exploited by offering them in heaven what they are denied upon earth. At the same time, by holding before them a vision of what they are denied, religion plays, at least partly, a progressive role in that it gives the common people some idea of what a better order would be. But, when it becomes possible to realise that better order upon earth in the form of communism, then religion becomes wholly reactionary, for it distracts men from establishing a new possible good society on earth by turning their eyes toward heaven. Its sentification of the existing social order makes it a counter-revolutionary force. Thus, in the course of building a communist society, the Marxist must fight religion, since religion will inevitably stand in the path.

Kautsky's thinking does not deviate considerably from the well known scheme. For the sake of clarity, his thought may be designated as positive and negative, remembering that the positive is negated when religion vis a vis Christianity becomes a tool of the powerful

bourgeoisie clerical minority. Moreover, much of the positive value of Christianity is negated when the tools of scientific criticism extricate the social ideas from the religious illusions. Negatively, while religion serves to augment the power of the state and clerical minority, it is basically a questionable world-view. "The gods of religion," according to Kautsky, "had at first served as an explanation for the procession of nature whose casual connections were not yet understood." ²². The gods were means of explaining incomprehensible phenomena. They were also a means of consolation and aid in situations in which human strength seemed insufficient. In the first century, due to the disintegration of society, and the decline of scientific investigation and the luxugient spread of moral preaching, the masses were plunged into hopelessness and despair. Their initiative was crippled and their self-confidence stifled. The widespread cowardice and despondency of the era caused all to expect salvation only at the hands of extraordinary and supernatural powers. Their only support was the hope for assistance from some higher power, some redeemer, either by an

22. Ibid., p.178.

the masses yearn for sensations, marvels, hysterical ecstasy. Any independent resistance emperor or a God, not by one's own strength or the strength of one's class. Kautsky paints the situation quite well in the following lines. "The more impotent the individual feels himself to be, the more timidly he seeks for a firm support in some personality that stands out from the ordinary average; and the more desperate the situation becomes, the more a miracle is needed to save him - the more likely will he be to credit the person to whom he attaches himself as a rescuer, as a saviour, with the performance of miracles. In fact, he will demand these miracles as a test to prove that his saviour really possesses the power to rescue him. Superhuman powers were assigned to the old gods in order to afford an explanation of actual events that had been very precisely and correctly observed. Now superhuman powers were assigned to men, in order to enable them to produce effects that no one had yet observed, that were entirely impossible." ²³ In the situation of wholesale despair in the Imperial era, not unlike the "unhappy consciousness" which preceded the birth of the "absolute religion" in Hegel's system, the masses were helpless victims of any clever imposter, or of any energetic, self-confident adventurer. This blase indifference and disgust with life caused

23. Ibid., p.130-131.

the people to yearn for sensations, marvels, hysteria and ecstasy. Any independent resistance to any of the dominant powers was considered hopeless. In so many words, religious beliefs were born of men's dependence upon the irrational forces of nature and society, over which man had not yet secured control. They are the result of the lack of organisation, of the anarchic state of society and of the weakness of man. With Marx, Feuback, Kautsky and the other dialectical materialist, a belief in God is the result of the poverty and degradation of man. For man, who is aware of his own worth and dignity, belief in God will disappear. All the riches of man will be restored to him and there will be no further need for him to transfer these riches into the realm of the transcendent. With the advance in the knowledge of casual relations in nature and the reaffirmation of Man's essential dignity and worth, which had been falsely projected on God, the individual gods become more and more superfluous. The explanations of phenomena in religions are, in reality, alternatives to scientific explanations.

While being content to reveal Christianity's role in the furtherance of social goals, those which were indigenous to it and other Messianic aspirations which used Christianity as a platform for espousing

their ideas, Christianity was essentially, according to Kautsky, a temporary garment for social aspirations which were eternal. But, the expedient role assigned to Christianity founders on the rocks of Kautsky's theoretical perspective. The positive role assigned to religion was effectively performed as long as social goals were accessible to the masses in religious garb. But, when these qualities, according to Kautsky, became reactionary, and constituted only a means of retarding progress, and when the religious mode of thought was superseded by the methods of modern science, Christianity could no longer serve as an envelope for new social goals. In these conditions, Christianity was cherished only by backward classes and the strata of the population residing in backward regions.

In the Imperial era - the period when Christianity arose - only religious organisations could maintain themselves, or only religious societies were authorised to exist by the empire. "The individual could rise beyond himself only by means of a moralising mysticism, and thus attain the vision of goals transcending personal and temporary well-being. In other words, only by means of that mode of thought which is known as

religious..Only religious associations maintained themselves in the Imperial Period. But we should have an erroneous understanding of them if their religious form their moralising mysticism, should make us overlook the social content inherent in all these organisations, which gave them their strength: the longing for a cessation of the existing sad conditions, for higher social forms, for a close co-operation and a mutual support for these many individuals now mentally homeless, who drew new courage and joy from having banded together for high achievement."²⁴.

While religious organisations preached a new social ideal under a religious cloak, Kautsky tells us that if we understand the necessary relations of cause and effect in our experiences - a possibility only on the basis of a materialistic philosophy - the proposal of great social goals may be freed of the religious illusions attached to them in the Christian era. "But all the necessary prerequisites for the existence of such a method were lacking in the Imperial period."²⁵.

It may be said that in this connection the purpose of Kautsky's writing is made abundantly

24. Ibid., p.170.

25. Ibid., p.169.

clear. Bringing to bear on Christianity sources, literature and history of the era a so-called scientific method informed by the materialistic conception of history, Kautsky seeks to extricate the permanent social ideas from the temporary and questionable religious medium. In his scheme Christianity differed in no point, not in opposition to the spirit of the times. All the distinctive ideas in the faith idealistically and traditionally associated with the person and teachings of the central individual in the faith, Jesus the Christ, are to be sought for in an explication of the "economic" root of the ideas. The morality of Christianity, its views on slavery, charity, labour and even its doctrinal roots, e.g. Monotheism, trinitarianism, the God-man, arose from social ideas which were the product of the processes of production and consumption in the Imperial era.

Now that our author's scheme of reasoning, his presuppositions and negative judgements of Christianity, are before us, we may address ourselves to the problems of Christianity in his writings, i.e., the non-Christian and Christian sources, the composition of the primitive Christian writings, the reliability of the teachings

and speeches of its central personality, and to the place given in Kautsky's account to the Christian organisation, the Church.

With one stroke, Kautsky, in line with the other mythicists, reduces the references to Jesus in non-Christian literature to later Christian forgeries and interpolations. His approach to the writings of Josephus, Tacitus and Seutonius, may be illustrated by his remark in connection with the supposed references to Jesus in the writings of the Jewish historian, Josephus. "We therefore find Christian interpolations in Josephus in every step, from the very beginning of the second century. His silence concerning the principal personages of the Gospels was simply too striking, and had to be altered."²⁶ Quoting from his precursor in the socio-theological view of the origins of Christianity, Kautsky augments his point. "But even if the passage (referring to the passage about Jesus in Josephus) were admitted to be genuine, it would be no stronger than a spider's line, on which critical theologians would find it hard to suspend a human form. There were so many pseudo-Christis in the time of Josephus, and far into the second century, that we have no more

26. Ibid., p.25.

than a summary mention of them. There was a Judas of Galilee, a Theudas, an unnamed Egyptian, a Samaritan, and a Bar Kochba. There may very well have been a Jesus among them. Jesus was a very familiar name among the Jews - Joschu, Josua, the Saviour."²⁷.

"But," asks Kautsky, "do the Christian sources flow all the more plentifully?" "Have we not in the Gospel the most minute narration of the teaching and influence of Jesus?" After posing these questions, Kautsky cites the example of forgery and interpolation noted in Josephus and the other non-Christian sources as the guide to the excavation of genuine historical material in the New Testament.

The early Christians, Kautsky explains, were completely indifferent to truth. "These writers were not concerned with truth, but with making their point, and they were not at all delicate in the choice of their means."²⁸. But, being a product of their times, the Christians differed in little degree from other writers, Jewish and Greek philosophers. With the outlook of the age, credibility of miracles, clinging to superhuman authorities, the lack of a sense of reality, the

27. Kalthoff, Albert, "The Rise of Christianity",
page 20 - 21.

28. Kautsky, p.28.

depreciation of science, the gullibility of the public, legendary frame of reference in the Christian writers, ignorance of facts and the polemical, controversial and non-historical purpose of the Christian writings, we cannot, accordingly, treat these sources as historical. "For a number of generations," Kautsky writes, "the Christian teaching of the history of its congregation was limited to oral transmission, the handings down of feverishly excited, incredibly credulous persons, reports of events that had been witnessed only by a small circle, if they ever really took place at all - and which, therefore, could not be investigated by the mass of the population, and certainly not by its critical and unprejudiced elements. Only when educated persons, of a higher social level turned to Christianity, was a beginning made in the written fixation of its tradition, but, even in this case, the purpose was not historical so much as controversial, to defend certain views and demands."²⁹

The teachings and speeches of the Jesus God, (Kautsky's description of the Christ), are not, and in view of the interval separating the time when they were supposedly uttered and the moment

29. Ibid., p.325.

they were recorded - a half century after the death of Jesus, according to Kautsky's reasoning - the words of Jesus. "Why should the speeches of Jesus in the Gospel be anything but speeches which the author of these records wished that Jesus might have believed? As a matter of fact, the speeches as handed down contain certain contradictions, expressions that are at times rebellious, and, at other times, submissive, and which can be explained only by the fact that various tendencies were present among the Christians, each of which would adapt the speeches of Christ, in its tradition, to its own needs."³⁰ Kautsky proceeds to illustrate what he terms the audicious manner in which the Evangelists proceeded in these matters. "Compare the Sermon on the Mount as reported by Luke with the later record in Matthew. In Luke it is still a glorification of the poor, a condemnation of the rich. In the days of Matthew, many Christians no longer liked that kind of thing, and the Gospel of Saint Matthew, therefore, transforms the poor who shall be blessed into those who are poor in spirit, while the condemnation of the rich is entirely omitted. If this was the manner of treating speeches which had already been set down, what reason have we to believe that the

30. Ibid., p.34.

speeches Jesus is alleged to have delivered a half century before their recording are faithfully repeated in the Gospels? In the first place, it is absolutely impossible for mere oral tradition faithfully to preserve the wording of a speech that was not set down at once, over a period of fifty years after its delivery. Anyone who, in spite of this obvious fact, sets down speeches transmitted only by hearsay, indicates by this very act his readiness to write down anything that pleases him, or his extreme gullibility in believing at its face value everything he has been told."³¹.

It is because the Gospel of Matthew modified the revolutionary and socialistic character of the primitive Christian enthusiasm, and by the way, according to Kautsky, this was the reason why the Gospel of Matthew was adopted as the "golden mean" by the Church. The ecclesiastical opportunism made this "watered-down" Gospel its standard report of Christian origins and, accordingly, so Kautsky comments, the first Gospel cannot be trusted as a reliable account of the origins of the faith.

In connection with the recorded speeches of

31. Ibid., p.34-35.

Jesus and, in general, the content of the Gospels, particularly the passion narratives - "the portion which for nearly two thousand years has always made the profoundest impression on the Christian world and stimulated its imagination most powerfully"³² - there are numerous absurdities and contradictions growing out of the efforts of the Evangelists to retouch the original historical events. When Christianity spread beyond the borders of Palestine, and, particularly, when Jesus was being presented as a social instead of a National Messiah, the pagan Christians found that the tradition declared that the Romans had crucified Jesus as a Jewish Messiah, a King of the Jews - in other words, a champion of Jewish independence, a traitor to Roman rule. After the fall of Jerusalem, this tradition became doubly embarrassing. Christianity was now in open opposition to the Jews, and wished to be on good terms with the Roman authorities. It was now important to distort the tradition in such a manner as to shift the blame for the crucifixion of Christ from the shoulders of the Romans to those of the Jews, and to cleanse Christ not only from every appearance of the use of force, but

32. Ibid., p.396-397.

also from every expression of any pro-Jewish, anti-Roman ideas.³³ This transformation of the tradition was an extremely delicate task for the revisionists; one which, according to Kautsky, is not performed without leaving traces of the original tradition. In the case of the rebellious Messiah, "the proletarian seditious",³⁴ this alteration proved difficult indeed. In the present Christian sources, Jesus is represented as being opposed to all bloodshed, consents to be chained, and is thereupon executed - while his companions remain absolutely unmolested. But, if the Messiah was so peaceful, so opposed to any use of force, why did he permit his friends to bear arms when they went about with him? Kautsky is of the opinion that this contradiction can only be understood by assuming that the Christian tradition in its original form must have contained a report of a carefully planned coup d'etat, in which Jesus was captured, a coup d'etat for which the time had seemed to be ripe after he had successfully driven the banders and sellers out of the Temple. The later editors did not dare to throw out this report, deeply rooted in tradition, in its entirety. They mutilated it by making the use of force appear

33. Ibid., p.396.

34. Ibid., p.402.

35. Ibid., p.397.

37. Ibid., p.398.

to be an act undertaken by the Apostles against the will of Jesus.^{35.}

In their efforts to conceal something (an insurrection led by one of the claimants to the title of Messiah) at any price, the Evangelists, according to Kautsky, invented impossible and stupid situations. Judas' betrayal means something if he had a secret worth buying. "If the report of the coup d'etat that had been planned must be eliminated from the story, the tale of Judas' treason also becomes pointless."^{36.} Judas' treason was too well known among the comrades, their hatred of the betrayer too great, it was impossible for the Evangelist to eliminate this event entirely. "But he (the Evangelist) was now obliged to construct a new act of treason out of his own imagination, in which he did not meet with success."^{37.}

When the social conditions of the era, the time, the records were compiled, no longer required a rebellious, revolutionary and National Jewish Messiah, the interpreters conveniently put the Christian doctrine more amiably in order to attract the wealthier, the Romans and others who were not familiar with the original condition, and, if they were conversant with the actual happenings, these would have been too offensive.

35. Ibid., p.366.

36. Ibid., p.367.

37. Ibid., p.368.

Not only have the Christian sources been mutilated in their interpretation of the arrest and the reasons for the collapse of the movement, but the trial and execution of Jesus could not stand as they actually took place. The sentence of death is imposed by the Jewish court after a hasty trial which took place not according to Jewish practice. The culprit was tried, not in the courthouse, as is the custom, but in the Palace of the High Priest. The condemnation, while being immediately pronounced, violates the Jewish ethic. According to their judicial practice, only a sentence of acquittal could be pronounced by the court without delay; a condemnation could only be pronounced on the day following the trial.³⁸ But, in the interest of a violent anti-semitism, and the furtherance of the Christian movement in the Empire, at the time when the records were edited and compiled, the Jews must be shown to be the cause of the Messiah's death, not the Romans. Pilate, the Roman governor, is now depicted as a tolerant judge who was willing, if the people so desired, to release a prisoner - supposedly a Roman custom, but one which, according to Kautsky, was invented by the Evangelists to give Pilate and the Roman

38. Ibid., p.399.

justice a way out of the dilemma.^{39.}

Commenting on this intolerable contradiction, Kautsky writes, "And we are asked to believe that this man was exceptionally just and kind in the case of the proletarian seditious Jesus, besides showing a degree of consideration for the wishes of the people that was of fatal outcome for the accused."^{40.} Commenting further on this version of the events, Kautsky writes: "No-one ever invented anything more outrageously childish. But with this effort to represent the bloody tyrant Pilate as an innocent Lamb, and to make the native depravity of the Jews responsible for the crucifixion of the harmless and peaceful Messiah, the genius of the Evangelists is completely exhausted. The stream of their invention runs dry for a bit and the original story again peeps through at least for a moment. After being condemned, Jesus is derided and maltreated - but not by the Jews - by the soldiers of the same Pilate who has just declared him innocent. Pilate now has his soldiers not only crucify Jesus but, first, has him scourged and derided as King of the Jews; a crown of thorns is put upon his head, a purple mantle folded about him, the

39. Ibid., p.403.

40. Ibid., p.402.

soldiers bend the knee before him, and then they again beat him upon the head, and spit on him. Finally, they place upon his Cross the inscription, "Jesus, the King of the Jews". This again brings out the original nature of the denouement. Again the Romans appear as Jesus' bitter enemies, and the cause of their derision, as well as of their hatred, is his high treason, his claim to be King of the Jews, his effort to shake off the Roman yoke. Unfortunately, the simple truth does not continue to hold the floor for long. Jesus dies, and it is now necessary to furnish proof, in the form of a number of violent theatrical effects, that a god has passed away."⁴¹ "In this entire tale, the tendency of servility toward the Romans, and hatred for the Jews, is laid on so thick, and expressed in such an accumulation of monstrosities, that one would think it could not have had the slightest influence on intelligent persons - and yet we know that this device worked very well. This tale, enhanced by the halo of divinity, ennobled by the martyrdom of the proud proclaimer of a high mission, was, for many centuries, one of the best means of arousing hatred and contempt for the Jews, even in the most benevolent minds of Christendom; for Judaism was nothing to them,

41. Ibid., p.405.

they kept aloof from it, they branded the Jews as the scum of humanity, as a race endowed by nature with the most wicked malice and obstinacy that must be kept away from all human society, held down with an iron hand."⁴².

It is certain, so Kautsky believes, that but a small minority of the primitive Christian writings really were written by the authors to whom they are attributed. Moreover, the original text has, as has been illustrated from Kautsky's views on the Sermon on the Mount, the arrest, trial and execution of Jesus, been distorted by later revisions and additions. What then of the Pauline Epistles, the writings which most scholars believe to be more reliable, because they were the first documents to be composed within the circle of the faith? Kautsky extends his criticism of forgery to cover these writings when he says that the epistles.. 'do not include a single one whose genuineness has not been disputed. The most brazen of these forgeries is probably that of the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians. In the imitated letter, the author, who conceals himself under the name of Paul, utters the following warning: "That ye be not shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by

42. Ibid., p. 406-407.

spirit nor by word, nor by letters as from us" (11:2), (a forged letter is meant), and, finally, the forger states: "The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle; so I write." Of course, it is just these words that betrayed the forgery.⁴³

While Kautsky recognises the view that Paul's letters may constitute the oldest literary products of Christianity, they are to be impugned on grounds of the silence to the teachings, activities and the person of its central figure - Jesus of Nazareth.

It may be clarifying at this point to enquire of Kautsky: "How, if the sources are so unreliable and infested with later revisions and forgeries motivated by the changed social circumstances of the Christians, can the narratives serve to mirror the nature of early Christianity, as Kautsky views it?" "How, if the sources are so contradictory and worthless, does Kautsky separate the kernel from the husk - the compromises which the early congregation made in a sympathetic world?" If, in defense of his primary thesis, the proletarian communistic structure of the primitive faith and congregation, he can say against one claiming to find other factors in the New Testament..

43. Ibid., p.37.

"the specific teachings of Jesus, of which we know nothing definite at all, cannot be used to prove anything against the assumptions of the early communism"⁴⁴. one would enquire of his treatment of the text and the source of his information, particularly since he has told us that the non-Christian sources are not to be trusted. Where does he get his information for the character of the congregation, if not from the mutilated sources in the New Testament? His book concerns itself, as has been pointed out, with the social conditions in the Graceo-Roman world, the hopelessness, the despair and the hope experienced on every hand for a "better day" - a day to be realised with the coming of the Messiah. While the social set-up reflects a desire for improved social conditions, does Kautsky justify Christianity's role in the "Imperial Era" when he treats it as one expression and one possible fulfillment of these social ideals? The sources may be unreliable and unhistorical to Kautsky, but their unreliability does not prevent their utilisation when they supplement his central thesis - a thesis which we believed to be superimposed on the texts.

44. Ibid., p.337.

Kautsky's use of the sources to validate his thesis places him under the same accusation levelled by him against the theologians and their treatment of Jesus. He says of their vain attempts: "In the absence of all historical certainty, the name of Jesus has, therefore, become an empty vessel for Protestant theology - into which each theologian may pour his own intellectual equipment. One of them will make Jesus a modern Spinozist, the other a Socialist, while the official professional theologians will, of course, view Jesus in the religious light of the modern state. In fact, in recent days, they have represented him more and more boldly as the religious advocate of all those aspirations that are now claiming dominance in the greater Prussian, national Theology."⁴⁵.

Kautsky's efforts to depict Christianity as a personification of the working class movement is nowhere better illustrated than in his last chapter entitled, "Christianity and Socialism". He quotes his agreement with Ernest Renan's words: "If you will form an idea of the first Christian congregation drop in at the local section of the International Worker's Association."⁴⁶. And still

45. Ibid., p.41.

46. Ibid., p.463.

another writer with whom Kautsky agrees is quoted: "The French litterateur who wrote the ecclesiastical novel 'Les Origines du Christianisme', a plagiarism of German Bible criticism unparalleled for its audacity - was himself not aware how much truth these words contained. I should like to see my old "internation" who would read, let us say, the so-called Second Epistle to the Corinthians, without feeling the opening of old wounds at least in a certain sense."⁴⁷.

But, as Kautsky's book is an apology for a materialistic interpretation of history and, in particular, the modern worker's movement understood apart from the illusions of religion and the crutches of an unscientific view of historical happenings, Christianity, because of its initial communistic leanings, could serve his apologetic.

But, when the Christian movement in the fourth century underwent a radical transformation at the hands of the revisionists and opportunistic clergy, Christianity lost its power to serve as a garment for the ideals of the working class. The chief bearers of Christianity, the free urban proletarians, workers and idlers, strove to live on society, without giving any return. Work played no part in

47. Ibid., p.463.

their vision of the future. But not so with the modern proletariat, for it is a proletariat of labour and it knows that all society rests upon its shoulders. In summary praise of the modern proletariat as against the primitive proletariat, Kautsky writes: "Thus the primitive Christian communism was a communism of distribution of wealth and standardisation of consumption; modern communism means concentration of wealth and concentration of production."⁴⁸ The primitive Christian communism did not need to be extended over all society in order to be brought about. Its execution could begin within a limited area; in fact, it might, within those limits, assume permanent forms. Indeed, the latter were of a nature that precluded their becoming a universal form of society. Christianity under these circumstances, and understood in this manner, became by necessity, according to Kautsky, a new form of aristocracy. "It (Christianity) could not abolish classes, but only add a new form of domination to society."⁴⁹

Kautsky, in view of his sympathies, is convinced that modern communism will not contradict its basic goals or, in its development, create an

48. Ibid., p.467.

49. Ibid., p.467.

opportunistic hierarchy. The immense expansion of the means of production, the social character of the mode of production and the far-reaching concentration in the State of the most important objects of wealth, prepare the modern communists for the realisation of the social goals which, for a time, lay embedded beneath the ecclesiastical forms and religious illusions.

A concluding word in this connection illustrates Kautsky's antagonism to Christianity, and his optimistic hopes for the Socialist movement as it was taking shape in his day. "The period of the rise of Christianity is a period of the saddest intellectual decline, of the flourishing of an absurd ignorance, of the most stupid superstition; the period of the rise of Socialism is a period of the most striking progress in the natural sciences and a speedy acquisition of knowledge by the classes under the influence of the Social Democracy."⁵⁰.

3. Evaluation of Kautsky's Mythical Jesus.

What of the Historical, personal, Jesus of Nazareth? What place does the figure of the Messiah occupy in Kautsky's re-interpretation of Christianity? Does Kautsky deny the historicity of Jesus? Speaking first to the last question, his attitude toward the historical Jesus cannot

50. Ibid., p.471.

be determined on the basis of what he says about Jesus; rather, what he does not say, or say by way of implication and in the form of subtle innuendos, on the existence of Jesus the Christ. In his chapter, "The Story of Christ's Passion", Kautsky discusses the two factual events in Jesus' life which, according to his reckoning, any scientific historian may consider as "extremely probable" - his birth and his death - "two facts which indeed, if they can be proved, would show that Jesus actually lived and was not merely a mythical figure, but which throw no light whatever upon the most important elements in an historical personality - namely, the activities in which this person engages between birth and death. The hodge podge of moral maxims and miraculous deeds which is offered by the Gospels as a report on these activities is so full of impossible and obviously fabricated material, and has so little that can be borne out by other evidence that it cannot be used as a source."⁵¹ Yet, despite these fabrications and accretions, the two primary facts, Jesus' birth and death may be accepted, if for no other reason than they contain as narrated in the text "extremely embarrassing circumstances for the early Christians."

51. Ibid., p.395.

These facts were so well known to enable the authors of the Gospels to invent the facts or substitute their own inventions, a practice which they did without hesitation in other cases. ⁵²

The Galilean origin of Jesus, in view of the Messianic prophecies which foretold the birth of the Davidic Messiah in the city of Jerusalem and the peculiar subterfuges in order to connect the Galilean with the Davidic promises, demonstrate the historicity of the birth of Jesus in the eyes of our author. "If Jesus", Kautsky writes, "had been merely a product of the imagination of some congregation with an exaggerated Messianic vision, such a congregation would never have thought of making a Galilean of him." ⁵³

And the evidence for the death of Jesus stands on the same grounds. Kautsky believes the Gospels, however much they have been forged and edited by the demands placed upon the congregation when these records were compiled, permit us to assume that Jesus had planned an insurrection by the use of force, and had been crucified for this attempt. The reason for Jesus' death and the manner in which he was executed proved so embarrassing for the later congregations that,

52. Ibid., p.395.

53. Ibid., p.395.

on this basis alone, we can assume that the facts were not invented. It is too sharply in contrast with the spirit prevailing in Christianity at the time when it was beginning to reflect on its past and to record the history of its origin. Kautsky elaborates his case for the historicity of the death of Jesus: "The death of the Messiah himself by crucifixion was an idea so foreign to Jewish thought, which always represented the Messiah with the splendour of a victorious hero, that only a real event, the martyrdom of the champion of the good cause, producing an ineffaceable impression on his adherents, could have created the proper soil for the idea of the crucified Messiah."⁵⁴ If, as Kautsky has said, "we can place no faith in the speeches of Jesus, in the early history of his life, and surely not in his miracles, what is there left in the Gospels?"⁵⁵ Are the two events, Jesus' birth and death, capable of exercising a function which traditional theologians attach to the person and work of Jesus the Christ? Is Jesus simply a vehicle for the realisation of the proletarian goals in the first century, merely a representative, an instance of a revolt against class society?

54. Ibid., p.396.

55. Ibid., p.35.

Is Jesus a receptacle for the hopes of the masses? Three ideas, among many others, offer some insight into these questions. Firstly, speaking about the influence of the personality of Jesus upon his disciples, Kautsky comments: "But the Gospels were not composed by the disciples of Christ, they do not reflect the impression made by this personality, but, rather, the impression made by the narration of the personality of Christ on the members of the Christian sect."⁵⁶. After all, Kautsky continues, a tale concerning a fictitious person may make the most profound impression upon a system of society provided the historical conditions are suitable for the production of such an impression. In biblical literature, particularly in the centuries immediately preceding and following the time of Christ, invented personages have often exercised a very great influence, whenever the deed and teachings attributed to them corresponded to profound needs among the Jewish people. The prophet Daniel, a non-existent figure, according to Kautsky, served as a model for all later prophecies of the Messiah. The effect produced by this mythical figure is not a proof of its historical reality, nor is the effect produced

56. Ibid., p.35.

by the figure of Jesus a validation of his historicity.

But what of the effect of the resurrection? Does not this event, if we are to believe the New Testament reports and, in particular, Paul, the first to record the event, initiate the congregations? Concerning this matter, Kautsky writes: "It was not the resurrection of the crucified which created the Christian congregation and gave it its strength, but, on the contrary, it was the vigour and strength of the congregation that created the belief in the continued life of the Messiah."⁵⁷.

These two quotations lead us to enquire concerning the initiation of the faith and if the personality of Jesus is so incidental, the survival and perpetuation of the faith. Concerning the initiation of the faith, some ideas have been mentioned, but these thoughts and others may be focused. Concerning the initiation of the faith, Kautsky believes that Christianity and religions in general are to be understood not as the product of an individual superman, but as a social product.⁵⁸.

Christianity was a product of its time, a

57. Ibid., p.378.

58. Ibid., p.42.

product which was produced, as we have intimated in another connection, by the unification of the many seething social expressions. The Judasistic Messianic expectations formed the basis for the general longing for peace and well-being in the Imperial Era and the possibility of actualising these goals in the Messiah gave rise to the first Christian congregation. The impotence of the people, their sterility in face of the intolerable social conditions, their lack of self-confidence and their inability to make an energetic attempt to free themselves from these stifling circumstances on their own strength, led the early congregations to postulate a supreme personality, a superhuman ideal to guide them through the impasse. "The more impotent the individual feels himself to be, the more timidly he seeks for a firm support in some personality that stands out from the ordinary average, and the more desperate the situation becomes, the more a miracle is needed to save him, the more likely will he be to credit the person to whom he attaches himself as a rescuer, as a saviour, with the performance of miracles."⁵⁹ The decreasing interest in the natural sciences, Kautsky believes, and their

59. Ibid., p. 130-131.

displacement by a meditation on ethics, involved also an abandonment of the critical spirit which aims to test the correctness of each proposition by actual experience, and a further weakening of the intellectual stamina of the various individuals, thus producing an increased desire to find a support in the person of some great men. Men were moved now not by actual proofs but by authorities, and anyone desiring to produce an impression upon them had to see to it that he was supported by the necessary authorities. If these authorities did not provide the required passages, it became necessary to doctor them a little, or to create one's authorities out of whole cloth. In Kautsky's opinion, Daniel, Moses, Jesus, also his apostles, were such authorities.

But, Kautsky would have us to believe that, while the need for a supernatural redeemer was very real in the minds of the early Christians, it was, contrary to an individualistic interpretation of history, and even contrary to the orthodox treatment of the subject, an ideal personification. That is to say, the superhuman personality was a projection of the needs of the time. Christianity, being a social phenomenon,

an organic movement of the lower classes revolting against the intolerable conditions of the time, is not to be understood on the basis of a certain man, Jesus of Nazareth, having fulfilled all the supernatural claims made for his person by the later congregation. Jesus became a model for the congregation and a rallying point for the revolutionary drives. Into this model or representative were poured the needs of the time, particularly the need to make of Jesus a superhuman personality, a God who would bolster up their weakness and inspire them with confidence. Kautsky makes the point quite clear when he writes concerning the events which were attributed to the Messiah: "What we know of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ is, in reality, only an incident in the history of the sufferings of the Jewish people."⁶⁰ The needs of the time, the thought patterns and the unscientific perspective left no alternative for the early congregations and the authors of the New Testament narratives: their social goals were mirrored in a divine personality and their impotence in the face of the challenges of the day, e.g. demon possession, belief in miracles and the overarching power of the Romans, forced the early believers to picture their

60. Ibid., p.417.

social goals in a supernatural person. But, as we have noted, Kautsky is convinced that, while religion may have been an envelope for the social goals, this envelope, in view of scientific criticism, casual relationships, is no longer necessary in an understanding of the origins of the Christian faith.

If, then, the initiator of the Christian movement is not to be found in the study and influence of a historical personality, but to be understood as a social, revolutionary, communistic movement couched in religious, individualistic terminology, what then of the survival and propagation of the faith? What is to distinguish the Christian faith from the other faiths in the ancient world? If not the speeches of Jesus, his personal influence, his writings - of which we have none - and his resurrection, what is the lasting influence of the Christian faith? Kautsky writes: "Ecstatic faith in the personality of the prophet, and the love of miracles, rapture, the faith in the resurrection - all these we find among the adherents of the other Messiahs as well as among the adherents of Jesus. We may not seek the cause for the differentiation of one of them in that which all have in common. While it may be

natural for theologians, even the most liberal, to assume that, though all the miracles may be abandoned that are told of Jesus, Jesus himself remains a miracle, a superman, such as the world has never seen - we are forced to deny even this miracle. The only point of difference between Jesus and the other Messiahs is in the fact that the latter left nothing behind them in which their personality might be preserved, while Jesus bequeathed an organisation with elements that were excellently calculated to hold together his adherents and attract increasing numbers of new adherents..."The other Messiahs had merely gathered together bands for the purpose of insurrection; the bands dispersed after the failure of the insurrection. If Jesus had done no more than this, his name would have disappeared without a trace after his crucifixion. But Jesus was not merely a rebel, he was also a representative and champion, perhaps even the founder of an organisation which survived him and continued to increase in numbers and in strength."⁶¹ It is, then, not in his personality but in the creation that is connected with his name that we are led to seek the reason why the

61. Ibid., p.376.

Messianic activity of Jesus did not have the fate of the similar activities of Judas and Theodas and the other Messiahs of that time. With the increase of the organisation (the Church), as it grew more and more powerful, its martyr necessarily occupied the imagination of its members more and more, and they necessarily became more and more adverse to regarding the crucified Messiah as a wrong Messiah, more and more impelled to recognise him as the true Messiah in spite of his death, as the Messiah who would come again in all his splendour. It became more natural for them to believe in his resurrection, and the belief in the Messianic character and in the resurrection of the crucified became the characteristic mark of the organisation, distinguishing it from other believers in the Messiah.

In an effort to substantiate his emphasis on the social organisation, Kautsky offers his views on the resurrection. "If the faith in the resurrection of the Messiah had arisen from personal impressions, it would necessarily have become fainter and fainter in the course of time, being more and more obliterated by other impressions, and would finally disappear

altogether with the death of those who had known Jesus. But, if the faith in the resurrection of the Crucified was a result of the influence of his organisation, then this faith would become all the more solid and enthusiastic with the increase in the organisation, the less it positively knew concerning the person of Jesus, the less the imagination of his worshippers was fettered by definite details."⁶².

The idea of a personal resurrection, according to Kautsky, came to mean little more than a compensation for the loss of life: an idea to safeguard the involvement in dangerous social struggles. In his own words: "And mutual aid associations for the sake of personal advantage, were reassured as to the endangering of their persons by the idea of a personal resurrection with a subsequent rich reward; an idea which would not have been necessary in order to keep up the morale of the persecuted in an age whose conditions goaded the social instincts and feelings to the utmost, so that the individual felt himself irresistibly forced to obey them, even to the point of endangering his own advantage, his own life. The idea of a personal resurrection was, on the other hand, indispens-

62. Ibid., p.378.

able in an age in which all the social instincts and feelings had been depressed to an extremely low point by the progressive social dissolution, not only among the ruling classes, but also among the oppressed and exploited."⁶³.

In the last analysis, this socio-religious treatment of the origins of the Christian faith negates the existence of the personality of Jesus the Christ. Kautsky ends his investigation of the "Foundation of Christianity" with a point of view which was explicit in the first few pages of his treatise. At page fortytwo he said: "We say now of Jesus, that we are not even certain that he ever lived."⁶⁴.

In the preceding pages we have resorted to Kautsky's own words to clarify his thinking on historical Christianity. It is, as he has so often said, a temporary shell or framework for the social ideals which eventually broke away from the initial embodiment. Social conditions of the time, e.g. the outlawing of any secular organisations by the State, the unscientific viewpoint and the religious illusions of the period, forced the social goals to take the certain form which they were couched in during the first centuries. After the temporary shell

63. Ibid., p.380.

64. Ibid., p.42.

proved worthless, the need for the framework was non-existent.

In our next chapter we pass to a man - and a tracing of Christian origins - which is even more fanciful. J.M. Robertson and the related writers on the points of view elaborated in his thought, e.g. Arthur Drews, W.B. Smith, are interested in the parallels to the Christian message in the first century. The interesting thesis of a pre-Christian Jesus ("Der Vorchristliche Jesus" - W.B. Smith's central work) demands our serious attention. On the basis of comparative religion and comparative hierology, these men decided that the birth of Christianity was a hundred years older than the customary date. The origins of Christianity are not to be located in the mytho poetic personalisation of the community or the embodiment of certain ideas in an individual. The human figure is not gradually elevated to a divine status, nor is the historical Jesus to be understood as human figure which became God through his ministry or resurrection. On the contrary, Jesus was never a human figure raised to divine worth. The Gospels do not depict a

CHAPTER V

human figure at all; they concern a God that progressively became human through the imaginations of the early community. Now, let us turn to a description of the methodology of this school of "new mythicists" as they are called. J.M. Robertson, because he inspired the others in their approach to the origins of the Christian faith, will concern us in our next chapter.

In the first section of his book "Christianity and Mythology" (1900). The problem of Christian mythology can be best dealt with by placing our ideas over against the divergent views current in many works on mythology. Dr. Percy Gardner in his work "Exploratio Evangelica" says of Myth... "Probably at that time (early Christian age) in all the Levant the true myth making age was over. But the faculties which had been employed in the construction of myth were still at work and they found their natural field in the adoption of history to national and ethical purpose." "1. Robertson comments on what he regards as the old, untested, metaphysical conception of mythology implied in Gardner's idea... "Such language seems to me to confute itself. In any case the whole drift

1. Robertson: Christianity and Mythology: p. IVIII

CHAPTER V

"THE PRE-CHRISTIAN JESUS"

J. M. Robertson

1. Introduction

J.M. Robertson summarises the purpose of his study and the manner in which it is to be treated in the first section of his book "Christianity and Mythology." (1900). The problem of Christian mythology can be best dealt with by placing our ideas over against the divergent views current in many works on mythology. Dr. Percy Gardner in his work "Exploratio Evangelica" says of Myth..." 'Probably at that time (early Christian age) in all the Levant the true myth making age was over. But the faculties which had been employed in the construction of myth were still at work and they found their natural field in the adoption of history to national and ethical purpose.' "¹ Robertson comments on what he regards as the old, untested, metaphysical conception of mythology implied in Gardner's idea..." "Such language seems to me to confute itself. In any case the whole drift

1. Robertson: Christianity and Mythology: p.XVIII

of the present work is a gainsaying of such divisions as the one thus sought to be drawn."² Robertson's additional remarks in the same connection bring in focus his definition of myth and the fight which he is to wage against what he terms the "limitary conceptions of myth" and the "separatist fallacies" - i.e. myth divorced from religion and ethics in a primitive ethos; dividing the mythopoeic and all other mental processes; between the different aspects of early classification; between myth and religion, religion and magic, myth and early morals, myth and legend, myth and alloys of myth and tradition, myth and supernaturalist biography. Concerning Gardner's conception of myth, Robertson remarks, "Dr. Gardner speaks again of the 'vague and childish character of the true myth.' I submit that there are all degrees of vagueness and childishness in myth, from the grossest to the slightest, even in the pre-Christian lore of Greece and that, though there may be grading, there can be no scientific sunderance. A myth commonly so-called

2. Ibid: p.XVIII

when all is said, is simply a false hypothesis (whether framed in bad faith or in good faith) which once found easy credence; and when inadequate or illusory hypotheses find acceptance in our time, we see exemplified at once the play on the myth-making faculty and that of the normal credulity on which it lives."³ This summary approach to myth, as Robertson understands the concept and its application, may receive further clarification from some passages lifted from the body of his work. Describing myths, he says that they are..."simple hypotheses justifiable as such at the time when they were propounded, but which fuller experience has proved to be inadequate."⁴ "Myth, broadly speaking, is a form of traditional error and, while the definition of mythology turns upon the recognition of the special form, the bane of the science has been the more or less complete isolation of it in thought from all the other forms...Any form of traditional error, it seems clear, must occur in terms of the general conditions of traditional error, and such error in general

3. Ibid: p.XVIII

4. Ibid: p.

must be conceived in terms of men's efforts at explanation or classification of traditional errors; and the business of mythology is to trace, as far as may be, how they (these errors) came to be started and conserved."⁵ "Taking myth as a form of traditional error, we note that such error can arise in many ways and, when we have noted all the ways, we have barred supernaturalism once for all - be it explicit or implicit. Unfortunately the rectification has been ignored by those mythologists who are concerned to retain either the shadow or the substance of supernaturalism and, until the naturalist position is restated in full, four square to all the facts, they will doubtless continue to obscure the science."⁶

There is for Robertson no distinction to be made between the 'true myth-making' age B.C. and that which followed. While modern science makes impossible, according to Robertson, the old easy mythopoesis among people scientifically instructed, the educated

5. Ibid: p.2.

6. Ibid: p.30

general more positive, more inductive, less a priori world in their allegiance to the Christian myths and in their belief in the esoteric cults - e.g. Mormonism, Madame Blavatsky and Mark Baker Eddy - the mythopoiesis is still at work..." and there is only a tint of psychic difference, so to speak, between their mental processes and those which avail to secure the currency of any fallacious belief in politics or in science."⁷

Possibly two more introductory remarks will serve to focus the writings which we will be examining. The one concerns his disagreement with the Hegelian approach to mythology via metaphysics and Robertson's claim to objectivity in his assessment of the origins of Christianity. Quarrelling with the Hegelian presuppositions of Strauss, Bruno Bauer and F.C. Baur who, on the basis of their a priori philosophical reconstructions of the biblical text, divided the myth-making stage between the ideas stated on a pictorial (Vorstellung) level and the philosophical stage, when metaphysics restated the eternal truths, Robertson delineates his own approach to myth, "I claim that, so far as it goes, it (his work) is in

7. Ibid: p.XIX

general more positive, more inductive, less a priori, more obedient to scientific canons, than that of the previous critics known to me who have reached similar anti-traditional results. It substitutes an anthropological basis, in terms of the concrete phenomena of mythology, for a pseudo-philosophical presupposition."⁸

His quarrel with the supreme place accorded to the "Absolute Religion" by the Hegelians and their reasons for doing so will receive additional comment.

J.M. Robertson, a layman - his lay approach to Christianity is emphasized - calls himself a naturalist; one that is impartial and detached in search of truth. As a naturalist, not interested in the truth of any religion, but in the questions to which religion first developed certain beliefs, he is free to reason justly on the historical data, and so may arrive at just conclusions. Quoting from F.C. Baur, Robertson adds, "There can be no true objective criticism until a man stands more or less indifferent to the result and

8. Ibid., p. XXII

frees himself as far as possible from all subjective relations to the object of criticism.'"⁹ Robertson broadens his claim to objectivity by contrasting the naturalist and rationalist endeavours..."Rationalists are thus far divided on the historical issue, partly because of the uncertainty of the evidence, partly because of the differences or oversights of logical method. But in the case of the disputant who sets out with a belief in the complete historic truth of the Christian religion, miracles and all, impartiality is impossible. He holds his own religion to be supernatural and true, and every other to be merely human and false in so far as it makes supernatural claims. Thus for him every question is as far as possible decided beforehand. He is overwhelmingly biased to the view that any 'myth' which resembles Christian 'record' is borrowed from that; and if, in some instances, he repels that conclusion it is still, as we shall see in the sequel, for an a priori theological reason and not for simple historical

9. Ibid., p.137.

reasons. On such lines no sound critical results can be reached but, whereas the rationalist inquiry is in this connection logically free of presuppositions, any permanent results it attains are pure gain to human science and must finally strengthen the naturalist position if that position be really scientific."¹⁰

Commenting on the scholars who reconstruct Christian origins at will, Robertson says of their approach in an earlier work ("Pagan Christs")..."Their general procedure is simply that of scholastics debating in vacuo, assuming what they please and rejecting what they please.. In due time the modern specialists, or their successors, will realize that their main positions as to Christian origins are equally fabulous; but they or their successors will continue to be conscious of their professional perspicacity and solemnly or angrily contemptuous of all lay criticism of their 'method'. 'Wir Gelehrten vom Fach' they still call themselves in German - 'we scholars by profession' - thus disposing of all lay criticism."¹¹

10. Ibid., pp. 137-138

11. Robertson, "Pagan Christs", p.XV

But is Robertson's claim valid in view of the numerous passages in his earlier work "Pagan Christs." ? One in particular must be borne in mind as we survey Robertson's unprejudicial reconstruction of Christian origins. He speaks of the 'utter insecurity of the historical foundation' of Christianity and of those who abstractly insist on the historicity of Jesus—they "must either recede from their position or revert to claims expressive merely of the personal equation - statements of the convincing force of their 'religious experience' - or claims to special 'percipience'."¹²

11. Progress of the Science of Mythology.

Much like Strauss, Robertson undertakes to give a historical survey of the mythological speculations and the bearing of the mythus on the origins of Christianity. While professing to be objective in his treatment he, again with Strauss, brings to bear certain implicit and sometimes explicit propositions on his writing. Two propositions are developed in the two works which we will examine. In his "Pagan Christs"

12. Ibid., p. XVII

and to some extent in "Christianity and Mythology" the evolutionary nature of religious beliefs and the kinship of all religious cults, particularly those which involve human sacrifice and theophagous sacrament, and those cults which the founder figures as an inspired teacher, receive expanded treatment. There are three quotations which serve to mirror the point. In "Pagan Christs" Robertson writes... "No historical principle is better established than this, that all historic religions run into and derive from some other religion, the creeds of all mankind being simply phases of a continuous evolution."¹³ Again... "There is not a conception associated with the Christ that is not common to some or all of the Saviour cults of antiquity."¹⁴ Again... "In fundamentals, in short Christism (Christianity) is but paganism re-shaped; it is only the economic and doctrinal evolution of the system - the first by Jewish practice and Roman environment and the second by Greek thought - that constituted new phenomena in religious history."¹⁵

13. Ibid., p.284.

14. Ibid., pp.205-206.

15. Ibid., p.206.

The parrallelism between religions receives summary treatment in "Christianity and Mythology", but his "Pagan Christs" brings in focus the ideas which Christianity drew from other cultic systems. The question which Robertson brings to bear on his researches in both books has to do with the origin of the stories and the source of the symbolism. It is believed, according to Robertson, by Christians and even some of their critics that the Gospel stories came into circulation at the foundation of Christianity and so became accessible to the world. But as to the source of these stories - as to how these particular miraculous narratives came to be told in connection with Jesus - no inquiry is made and apparently the difficulty is not seen, though to a scientific age the clearing up in some way of the causation of the Christian legends is as necessary as to explaining how these legends are duplicated in other religions, Krisha, Mithra and Buddhism. "It is needless here to challenge afresh the historical value of the conflicting records, wherein a slight detail of no historical importance enters only to take varying forms for

symbolical reasons. What we are concerned with is the source of the symbolism."¹⁶ While recognising the services performed by Strauss and others in connection with the origins of the legends and myths in the New Testament, and principally the roots of these forms in the Old Testament, Robertson goes beyond Strauss to the pagan analogies and parallels.

The first proposition, as we have outlined it, concerns the evolutionary, inter-related character of religion. The second proposition, his understanding of myth, is developed in his later treatise, "Christianity and Mythology". His definition of myth and the unitary character of mythical thinking and religion, myth and ethics, myth and magic, must be grasped before the parallelism between Christianity and the pagan narratives, principally regarded as the source of the Christian myths, can be fully appreciated. Robertson's central thesis of a pre-Christian Jesus Cult lying behind the New Testament is the consequence of his view of myth and the organic, evolutionary nature of all religions. When the mythical principles have been demonstrated the origins of Christianity may be

16. Ibid., p.120.

elucidated. Unlike his predecessors in the field who, so Robertson complains, demonstrated the mythical character of scripture and fell back on the textual analysis of the documents, leaving the question of the truth and reason as much as possible in the background, Robertson proposes to carry forth the findings and follow them out in their logical conclusions. The elucidation of the organic nature of the myths and the evolutionary character of religion takes him into a realm which has been called "comparative religion" or "comparative mythology". Robertson's pre-Christian Jesus thesis, according to him, is the only solution to a scientific understanding of the Christian faith. A survey of what he terms the "limitary and separatist versions of myth" will clarify his approach to mythology.

111. Limitary and Separatist Versions of Myth.

For the sake of brevity Robertson's ideas will be grouped in several general classifications - classifications which his discussion warrant but which are not made by him. It is evident from his

200 page treatment of the fallacies and dichotomies that these limitations are all of one kind - a misunderstanding of the mythus due either to a metaphysical or psychological perspective in the interests of Christianity or Theism. Robertson's view of myth, as we have inferred, is a form of traditional error which can occur in many ways and the process of wrong hypotheses continue to exist with scientific consciousness, oftentimes confounded with it. An anthropological position, one that Robertson assumes in his discussion, recognises... "that primitive man fused instead of discriminating the states of mind which set up his myths and his cosmosophy, his ethic and his ritual...The historical form and ideal purport of every myth or primitive usage 'are inseparable and penetrate each other; and it is only by the abstraction of a later age, from which all faith in the myth as such has vanished, that they are separated.'"¹⁷ Nothing then is excluded from mythological expression, neither morals, nor philosophy, neither history nor religion, have escaped the spell of that "ancient sibyl". Primitive man's

17. Christianity and Mythology: p.93.

mind was not in watertight compartments.

"Scientifically speaking, the term religion covers all the phenomena under notice. Religion in the mass has always been mythological, always ritualistic, always theological, always ethical, always connected with what cosmic emotion or apperception there was. These attributes are in themselves phases of human tendency which make and make-for-religion. It is neither here nor there to say that in explaining one we do not explain the other."¹⁸

But there are those interpreters in the field of comparative mythology and more particularly those applying the mythical key to biblical exegesis, who misunderstand the nature of the mythus or in their understanding limit the application of the mythological. If mythological thinking is the common ground in all religions, and Robertson is convinced that it is, one is driven, according to him, to consider whether the Christian religion is not consanguineous with the rest in myth and ritual. To prepare the way for this consideration is Robertson's purpose in the section which he calls "The Progress of Mythology" in his book "Christianity and Mythology". Grouping the separatist

18. Ibid., p.92.

views of myth, we will outline six approaches to myth which Robertson rejects.

1) The first separatist view concerns the treatment of mythology as a subject having to do with reprehensible, immoral practices of the heathen gods, or the animization which went on consciously or unconsciously in the primitive mind. These fanciful stories or these "absurd and offensive anecdotes" have nothing to do with civilized man. In this approach to myth, according to Robertson, .. "Mythology is kept perfectly safe and made to figure as an academic science, by being kept to the themes of the dawn, the tree, the storm cloud, the earth-Mother and the heathen Sun-God; the Sanskrit, savagery, totems, fairies and folk-lore, plus the classics." ¹⁹ This approach, in the name of some form of acquired or inherited prejudice, seeks in the name of God to sunder what man primordially joined together. As pro-Christian or pro-Thesisists,

19. Ibid., p. 15.

20. Ibid., p. 36

21. Ibid., p. 58

some interpreters would isolate the phenomena of Greek and Roman religious evaluation from the mass of anthropological and hierological science, or their determination to make out that what is not on the line of evolution of Christianity is not religion. Robertson says of the scientific principle which guides his investigation: "From its standpoint, Roman religion (primitive ideas and the religion of the Greeks) is to understand, certainly, as varying under special determinants like every other, but as exemplifying universal psychological principles."²⁰ "Where his language gives indications such as in other languages we know to be illusory, the only reasonable course is to conceive the Roman's mental processes broadly in terms of those of other races at a similar culture stage..The comparative method .. is based upon the fact that our common nature manifests itself in like ways under like circumstances."²¹ "The Romans", to carry through Robertson's

20. Ibid., p. 86

21. Ibid., p. 88

illustration, "like other races had a native folk lore in which tales were told of their Gods.

When they encountered educated Greeks they did

not drag before them the crudities of their

father's faith. Like the Yahwistic Hebrews,

though for different reasons, they lent them-

selves to a wholesale dismissal, so far as

literature went, of their religious antecedents." ²²

Offering a final word on the chaos produced

by this manner of separatism, Robertson says:

"When this chaos of pseudo-classification can

be solved, we may reconsider our evolutionary

and monistic conception of religion and myth.

For the present, it seems to offer the sole

harbour for scientific thought." ²³

2) Another separatist view concerns the psychological fallacy advanced by those who conceive of the myth as a species or by-product of the primeval mind, something out of touch with the normal psychology of those who produce

22. Ibid., p. 88

23. Ibid., p. 90

it, or at best psychologically alien to certain other of their mental processes.

Integral to this severance is the dichotomy erected between ethics and mythology or between religion and mythology. Robertson agrees that the mythologist must recognise a division of labour between the discussion of the development and valuation of reasoned and written religion, doctrine and the narrative bases and symbols - the latter being the true business of the mythologist, but he says: "To put aside the mass of written theology, the argumentative side of the later historical systems is one thing and to keep out of sight the vital connections and reactions of myth and doctrine is quite another."²⁴

Robertson's remarks on the works of Lang focus the arbitrariness which to his mind condemns so much modern theory. "The one respect in which Mr. Lang's books on 'Mythology and Religion' are

24. Ibid., p. 41.

consistent is that in each in turn he looks only to one side of the shield - a course so arbitrary and so confusing that it can be explained in terms of some extra-scientific bias. At the beginning of the historic period, ethics and religion everywhere inseparably blended with myth; and in so far as religion has remained bound up with myth and with primitive ethics down to our own days, when rational ethic has definitely broken away from the old amalgam, it is supremely important and supremely interesting to trace not merely the earlier forms of myth, ritual and religion, but their conjunct development into and survival in the latest forms of all. To stop short of that, as Mr. Lang and so many other mythologists do, is wilfully to impoverish and humble the science, keeping it always concerned 'with the follies of Phoenecians and Greeks', always among the ancients or the Hottentots, always out of sight or even surmise of the bearings of

these matters on the creeds and institutions of the civilised nations of our days." ²⁵ Lang and the other priorists in the field of mythology, accordingly, find 'high' symbolic origins for so many of primitive myths. "We are asked", by these priorists, according to Robertson, "to suppose that primeval man (whom all the while, by natural inference, we must hold to have had animistic habits of mind) began with a 'high' conception of a righteous and benevolent Supreme Being, as savages conceive righteousness and benevolence: that is, that without a single preliminary animistic concept (though the ape-man had the animistic habit before him) the primal man proceeded straight to a universalist theistic abstraction -- all the while playing the cannibal with trespassers. Then, having thought out a 'righteous' Omnipotent God, a 'moral Eternal' who represents only his own morality, the cave man - or whatever else we

25. Ibid., p. 41.

figure him to have been - developed 'supernormal' powers which revealed to him all manner of forces that do not exist!"²⁶ Commenting on this division, Robertson says:..."it is therefore mere scientific perversity on his (Lang's) part to revert to a 'high' original for the God-idea which, as an evolutionist, he must admit to have its roots in primal savage life. When Brugsch, another priorist, decides that 'from the root and trunk of a pure conception of deity spring the boughs and twigs of a tree of myth, whose leaves spread into a rank and impenetrable luxuriance', Mr. Lang replies that the myths 'flourish like mistletoe on the oak, over the sturdier growth of a religious conception of another root.' The two formulas are alike fallacious. The 'root' alike of the minor myths and the larger is the same - the mythopoeic faculty of the evolving man; the God-ideas which satisfy Brugsch are but the modifications of earlier by later thought;

26. Ibid., p. 67.

and those quasi-higher God-ideas of savages which so appeal to Mr. Lang are but thought-forms into which later men put higher moral and philosophical notions, as they do with so much of the rest of the savage's vocabulary ... To call one aspect of primitive anthropomorphism 'absurd' and another aspect 'sacred', when both alike are the best the savage can do to explain his cosmos, is an unscientific inconsequence. And to condemn Huxley and others for making a severance between savage ethic and savage theology, while affirming just such a severance between savage ethic and savage myth, is to give the inconsequence an aggressive emphasis"²⁷..... With Frazer (Golden Bough) who, according to Robertson, had no supernatural axe to grind, we are indebted to our savage predecessors for much of what we thought our own, and their errors were not wilful extravagances or the ravings of insanity, but

27. Ibid., p. 68.

28. Ibid., p. 68

29. Ibid., p. 44

simple hypotheses, justifiable as such at the time when they were propounded, but which a fuller experience has proved to be inadequate.²⁸

There is no evidence that the mentality of primeval man, according to Robertson, "passed through successive stages of soul-lore, ghost-lore and God-lore, adding the second and third one by one to the first. Neither is it possible to show in terms of experimental psychology that a God-idea could come into being only as a fresh superstructure on concepts of soul and ghost: rather the naturalistic surmise is that a God-idea grew up with and in terms of the others, and was only by a means of reflection or of priestly institution differentiated from them."²⁹ The inherited lore may be modified from period to period either upwards or downwards, either in terms of increasing knowledge or in terms of deepening ignorance, as the socio-economic conditions may bend; or, it may be, alternately

28. Ibid., p. 68

29. Ibid., p. 44

or conflictingly, in terms of a strife of forces and institutions. The Hebrew sacred books crystallize round the most disparate nuclei of older lore and the Christian innovation is connected with older and lower conceptions of ritual theophagy.³⁰

Robertson's unitary view of myth and ethics, myth and religion and myth and magic, and the continuation and modification of the myth-making faculty is particularly evident in what he says concerning the ethical standards of the savage and the civilized. "There is no vital ethical difference, but only a refinement of manners or modes between the crude practice of sacrifice and the clinging to the theory of divine sacrifice, and the fact that a given savage, lacking the wherewithal, does not offer sacrifices to his God does not make him a better man than the slaughterous Hebrews of the past. Nor does the

30. Ibid., p. 45

latter-day Christian in turn salve his case by substituting for his compromising sacrificial idea that of the sacrifice of a contrite heart; for his God remains the cause of evil and his ethic incurably unsound. Thus the ethic that for Mr. Lang is 'highest' is intertwined with mythology just as surely as that of the savage who, whether sacrificing or not, imagines a God who punishes wickedness, though according to the same savage (says Mr. Lang) the same God is the Omnipotent Creator of all. In fine, all theistic ethic is flagrantly mythological.³¹

Robertson's views on the separatist fallacy in question - the division between ethics and mythology and between religion (the God-idea) and mythology - may be further illustrated from his words on God-making in his "Pagan Christs". Up to this point one idea is clear: From age to age through channels of custom and emotional credulity we are dealing with the same kind of psychological problem, e.g. the habit of erroneous

31. Ibid., p. 65

belief in which men are collectively deceived.

This deception persists in all stages of civilization and the result is a widespread hallucination.

Commenting on the unhistoric figure of Buddha and the Gospel Jesus in his "Pagan Christs", we learn that each was produced by the mythopoeic action of the religious mind in a period in which the primary-God-making had given way to secondary-God-making, and in particular to the craving for a Teaching God who should originate religion and moral ideas as the other Gods had been held to originate agriculture, art, medicine, normal laws and civilization. "On our Naturalistic view of the rise of the religions of the Secondary or Teaching Gods, it is sheer human aspiration that has shaped all the Christs and all their doctrines; and one of the very causes of the total miscarriage is just that persistence in crediting the human aspiration to Gods and Demigods, and representing

as superhuman oracles the words of human reason. Unobtrusive men took that course hoping for the best, seeking a short cut to moral influence; but they erred grievously. So to disguise and denaturalise wise thoughts and humane principles was to keep undeveloped the very reasoning faculty which could best appreciate them. Men taught to bow ethically to a Divine Teacher are not taught ethically to think: any aspiration so evoked in them is factitious, vestural, verbal or at best emotionally superinduced, not reached by authentic thoughts and experience. When haply, the nameless thinkers in all ages have realised and distilled the wisdom or unwisdom given out as divine are recognised in their work for what they were, and their successors succeed in persuading the many to realise for themselves the humaneness of all doctrine, the nations may perchance become capable of working out for themselves better gospels than the best of those which turned to nought in their hands while they held them as

revelations from the skies."³²

3) Another separatist fallacy, related to the preceding one, concerns the compartmentisation of magic and religion. Robertson complains in his "Pagan Christs" that, while Frazer and Jevons make magic precede religion, these interpreters overlook the continuance of magic in the historic religions, Judaism and Christianity, i.e. propitiation of God and the eruption of God into the world. In the name of religion and more particularly in the interest of securing a unique status for Judaism and Christianity, another division is made in the primitive mind. Contrary to the thesis of Frazer, Robertson cannot envisage a period when a portion of mankind began to 'abandon magic as a principle of faith and practice and to betake themselves to religion instead.' Frazer's arguments, though he fails to take them seriously, reveal that men for whole ages practised both (religion and magic) concurrently; and that in terms of the case they are as likely to have taken

32. "Pagan Christs", p. 263

to magic because prayer failed as vice versa.³³
 Dr. Frazer says that.."a tardy recognition of
 the inherent falsehood and barrenness of magic
 set the more thoughtful part of mankind to cast
 about for a truer theory of nature and a more
 fruitful method of turning his resources to
 account."³⁴ But, according to Robertson, by
 his own showing Frazer has no right to this
 hypothesis. The magic of primitive man "was
 part of his way of thinking about what was for
 him the 'occult' or inferred side of things,
 which way of thinking as a whole was his
 religion."³⁵ Moreover, continues Robertson, "we
 are disallowed from charging inconsistency on
 primitive or ancient religious thought in respect
 of divergencies from later conceptions. The
 earlier theologian (as distinguished from his
 sophisticated successors) simply did not realise
 that any charge of inconsistency could arise."³⁶

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33. Ibid., p. 17
 34. Ibid., p. 17
 35. Ibid., p. 15
 36. Ibid., p. 16

The inconsistency of the early priests, his resort to magic and religion is posited by moderns on the assumption that they had a definite modern conception of the Omnipotence of a supernatural power. While on the contrary, according to Robertson, "This supreme idea, he had not."³⁷ It is, then, quite beside the case to argue, as Dr. Frazer does, that 'the fatal flow of magic lies in its misconception of the particular laws which govern natural sequences.' That is not a differentiation between magic and religion; for the religious conception that nature is to be affected by propitiatory unseen powers is just as fatally wrong; and it arose in the same fashion by "association of ideas", men assuming that nature was ruled by a personality like themselves.

Elaborating his unitary view of myth, magic, religion and ethics in connection with the severance between religion and magic, Robertson

37. Ibid., p. 16

says: "The clear solution, as distinguished from the rebuttal, of all such contradictions is to recognise that, however we may grade religious conceptions and systems, they are all parts of one process, even as are political conceptions and systems. To say that magic is hostile to religion and science, worship and art; and the distinction between art-magic and sympathetic magic-made after the express declaration that mere sympathetic magic was 'the germ of all magic' is an arbitrary stroke of pre-Christian classification, which, nonetheless, logically defeats its purpose. For the primitive sacramental meal was demonstrably on the plane of sympathetic magic inasmuch as, even when it did not kill the victim in a mimetic fashion, it was making friends with the God in the way of human fraternisation; and it is to this sacrament that Dr. Jevons, for obvious reasons, accords the special religious rank." ³⁸ .."The

38. Ibid., p. 28-29

scientific course consists not in taking advantage of the logical suicide of those who conduct the other, but in setting forth the fundamental analogy of the psychological process thus arbitrarily differentiated. The 'direct consciousness' of the theist - sheer hallucination apart - is simply a reversion to the earlier man's confidence in his animistic conceptions, doubled with the conscious resistance to sceptical criticism seen in every dream-interpreter and ghost-seer of the countryside. The persistence is simply a matter of temperament and degree of enlightenment; there are men who can transcend this like other testimonies of their direct consciousness, in learning to see it as a kind of hallucination which may be predicted to arise in some cases in regard to any theistic conception which any thinker may contrive to set up. Where there are images of the Virgin, men and women will have visions of the Virgin; where there are images of animal-God, there will be visions of animal Gods." ³⁹ The evolution of religious

mentality and the force of "reason" is brought out in Robertson's concept of error in the religious process:.. "All error being but incomplete or illicit induction, 'irrational' and relatively 'rational' ideas are alike products of the general mental process. The recoil from adventurous magic to precatory ritual is no more a renunciation of reason than the contrary progression; and all changes in religion are but better or worse applications of judgment under varying conditions of psychi-suggestion and economic pressure. It is indeed true - and be the truth clearly envisaged - that with the conscious resort to critical reason there begins potentially a process which may end in the negation of all the primary religious conceptions and propositions, even in their most purified philosophical form. When that end is reached, we may well say that philosophy and religion are differentiated, even as science is differentiated at once from magical

and from precatory religion, at the point at which it either repudiates or abandons their premises, and consciously proceeds on tested induction.

But even this reaction is never instantaneously complete: Witness the sociologising historians; and, on the other hand, there is an aspect or function of religion in respect of which it is structurally continuous with systems of doctrine which either abandon or repudiate its premises.

From the first, it belonged to his nature that man should connect his ethic with his cosmology, since the one like the other grew out of his instincts and perceptions and his effort to harmonise them. Precisely as he animised Nature, so did he moralise it; that is, he conceived of it in terms of what moral ideas he had. Thus it was that he could alternately resort to propitiation and to magic, and alternately feel fear and gratitude. Granting that his religious conceptions first crystallised on the lines of

his fears, it was inevitable that they should in time crystallise also in terms of his satisfactions; the one involved the other, and made it not only possible but probable that he should at times thank the very power he feared. Fear would involve propitiation, and propitiation was the door to gratitude. And thus it was that his Gods were in the long run ethically like unto himself, neither wholly beneficent nor wholly maleficent. "40

4) Still another separatist error in the interest of preserving a permanent place for Judaism and Christianity involves the philological definition and handling of myth in the linguistic schools. Early man, so these priorists contend, knew the sun to be inanimate though his language made him call it a person; and his descendants consequently regarded it as a person when they were able to describe it as inanimate. According to these men, called by Robertson, entomologists, Sanskritist and 'Aryan' school, myth is a dialect,

40. Ibid., p. 39-40

an ancient form of language - in point of fact a disease of the language. The advocates of the theory of family germs and inherited disease of language assume that every myth could be traced with some certainty to a definite natural origin. The verbal blunderings of the ancients could, in the hands of those with proper tools, such as were claimed to be in the possession of the German rationalists of the 18th and 19th centuries, be detected. Paulus and others extricated the shell or real events from the husks, but this historicist or naturalist school is vitiated, according to Robertson "by the fixed determination to reduce mythic narrative to misinterpretations of real events."⁴¹ In Paulus, the method, according to Robertson, approaches burlesque.

In the same vein, Robertson writes: "So many myths are inconsistent with themselves; so many are but fumbling explanations of ancient

41. Christianity and Mythology, p. 11.

rituals of which the meaning had been lost; so many have been couched up; so many embody flights of imagination that are not mere transcripts from nature; so many are primitively stupid; so many have been combined that such confidence (reducing them to their natural origins, real events) is visibly excessive." ⁴²

Still another weakness in this limitary view of myth has to do with Max Muller's confidence in concrete myth interpretation in terms of names. It has been proven, according to Robertson, along the lines marked out by Fontenelle and De Brosses, that no single myth can stand alone. There were Semitic influences on the Greeks and a singular parallelism in the mythology of races not known to have had any intercommunication. These facts supplied reason for a recasting of the mythological scheme, by way of recognising that there is more than 'one story' in hand, and that though 'the course of

42. Ibid., p. 20-21

the day and the year' covers a great deal of the matter, there are some other principles also at work.

Another factor which weakens the force of the argument advanced by these priorists is the forcing of a philological frame upon a psychological science. Mythicising, in Robertson's view, is a primitive psychosis. Mythology, Religion and Animism are alike but aspects of this general mentality.

5) Closely related to this separatist view is the philosophical view of myth, particularly associated with Hegel and his disciples, Strauss and Bruno Bauer. The Hegelian view may be summarised. The mythus in its early forms was the infant language of the race and poverty and necessity are its parents. Myth is, on this view, a forerunner to metaphysics. The childish, infantile, pictorial thinking, or the "Vorstellung" may be eliminated when the Idea (Notion or Begriff)

understands the thoughts which were, for the sake of expediency, so verbalised. In Hegel, Strauss and Bauer there was the idea of a myth and mythless religion. Christianity, considered by Hegel and Strauss to be the "absolute religion", was free from the Vorstellung. On the other side of philosophy, according to Robertson, Strauss' theorisings strike a scientific reader dumb by his naive assurance that his long investigation of the life of Christ need have no effect on Christian doctrine. Commenting on Strauss' assurance that the inner kernel of the Christian faith is not to be impaired by his critical researches, Robertson says: "There are different conceptions of what constitutes frivolity; and it would have been pleasant to have Voltaire's estimate of the seriousness of a scholar and theologian who produced an enormously laborious treatise of fifteen hundred pages to disprove every super-

natural occurrence connected with the life of Jesus, and at the beginning and end assured everybody that it all made no difference to religion, and that those must be frivolous who thought otherwise. Only in Hegelian Germany could such supernatural flimsiness of theory have been conceived as solid philosophy; and even in Germany, in the generation of Hegel, there was a good deal of serious if not frivolous comment on Strauss' final Kantian advice to the clergy: This was to keep on telling the mythical stories to the people with due attention to the spiritual application, thereby furthering 'endless' progress towards the dissolution of the forms in the consciousness of the community - and this in a work in the vernacular."⁴³

Historically and philosophically Strauss' work hindered the progress of the science of mythology. Historically, in that he confined his search for mythic parallels to the legends

43. Ibid., p. 13

of the Old Testament. "On the side of mythological science it (Strauss' 'Life of Jesus') was defective in that it overlooked many of the Pagan myth elements in the Christian cult, above all those bound up with the very central doctrine of the anthropic sacrifice and eucharist."⁴⁴ Then Strauss, though anxious to undercut the rationalistic, naturalistic approach to history (dealing with an event narrated as if it really occurred) obscured his research. Robertson says that Strauss deals with many of the Gospel stories on a historical level, as historical myth, though Robertson does not use this terminology.

Robertson's primary criticism of the Straussian approach seems to be that knowing the results of mythical analysis, Strauss still treated as great spiritual truths special to Christianity, data and doctrines which appertain to the systems and credences of buried paganism.

44. Ibid., p. 19

Robertson's main point, as have had opportunity to intimate, is the consanguinity of Christianity with paganism in myth and ritual and in the God-man.

On the level of Strauss' and Bauer's reconstruction, Christianity would be mythless when metaphysics was brought to bear on the picture language, but Robertson is anxious to point out that myth-making continues in Christianity and in all the elaborations of Christianity, whether in a philosophical reconstruction of Christology or in the "Lives" of Jesus written by the historicists. "Christianity, instead of progressively denuding itself of myth and symbol and ritual, shows everywhere the tendency to make more of them than ever, the Protestant impulse being on the way to euthansia in rationalism, while the forces of the myth-mongers and ritualists expand as the restrictive element is removed." ⁴⁵ When the concrete myth forms are considered along with

45. Ibid., p. 72

the parallelism in the pagan sources, then the metaphaic and ethics which were thought to be grafted on the forms by Hegel, Struss and Bauer will be seriously questioned.

IV. Evaluation of "The Progress of the Science of Mythology".

Summarily speaking, what has our investigation of Robertson's sketch of the Progress of Mythology and the separatist errors shown?

Primarily, Robertson's preparatory means of later treating Christianity as a variant of paganism, or "paganism reduplicated, reshaped." In order to remove the unique claims of Christianity the sources for the Christian myths must be located in the cults which preceded and the idea that the same psychosis in thought which produced the other cults was (and is now) at work in the production of the Gospel myths.

Robertson states his views on mythology in connection with the views which have been held on the subject and in particular those mythologists

who would limit myth or separate it from the other ideas in the primitive mentality; the ones who would separate myth from religion, ethics and magic; the ones who would make it one psychological function alien to the primitive mind; or on philological and philosophical grounds class myth as an inadequate form of language, an infantile mode of speech and though which must be justifiably discarded when, in the case of the linguistic interpreters, the causes for the misrepresentations are uncovered, or when, on philosophical grounds, metaphysics and abstract discursive reasoning displaces the naive mythical phase in mental history.

Myth, according to Robertson, is a form of traditional error, a fantasy in thought, a set of wrong hypotheses which must be eliminated; moreover, hypotheses which are framed by primitives and moderns alike fall under Robertson's critique. Mythical thinking is a thought pattern, a form of psychosis which is not limited to a

period before the advent of science, for in Robertson's own showing, these fallacious assumptions occur in cultures affected by the scientific method. Myth is then not a pre-historic mode of thought dealing with the advent of gods and their activity in the world. Myth can be a way of framing ideas in a historical period.. "Myth should be allowed broadly to include not only stories of a supernatural cast told of divine personages, but many quasi-historical narratives which fall short of asserting downright miracle; and not only stories of that case told about non-historical personages, but some told about historical personages.. Knowing how the human mind manufactures these modern false coincidences (legends having to do with Julius Caesar, William The Conqueror and others), we rather count ourselves to have therein a sidelight on coincidences of a more sacrosanct sort in olden times. When all is said, we have hardly any other

Way of divining how primeval men contrived to tell the same stories with innumerable variations of names and minor details."⁴⁶

Robertson seems undecided on the question; whether myths are unconsciously and spontaneously produced or whether they are wilful, conscious fictions. Strauss, we will recall, decided on the former attitude, but while Robertson is in sympathy with the latter view, there are statements which bring out his ambiguous attitude. For instance, he remarks: "If the Gospel stories are myths, the question arises: How such a story came first to be told? Robertson answers the question in connection with the Dionysiak miracle. This occurrence may have been a systematic priestly imposture, actually repeated year by year. However, the story came to be told, there was an esoteric idea presumably underlying the annual performance. But in the Christian tale there is no such element left above ground. In his words: "...We are driven to ask whether

46. Ibid., p. 122

the first narrator of the Christian version was other than a wilful vendor of fiction. It is hard to see how we can answer favourably; certain as it is that any story once written down in an accepted gospel was sure to be believed, there must have been a beginning in somebody's deceit. And if on this we are met with the old formula that a wilful fiction is not a myth, we can but answer that the formula will have to be recast. For we really know nothing of the precise manner of origin of, say, the myth of Isis and Osiris. We only know that it was believed; and as a belief it was for all practical purposes on all fours with the belief that Alexander was the son of Jupiter Ammon, and the belief that Jesus turned so many firkins of water into wine by divine volition. They were all traditionary forms of error; and the business of mythology is to trace as far as may be how they came to be started and conserved." ⁴⁷ Robertson summarises

47. Ibid., p. 121-122

his view on the rise and propagation of myths. We may quote him in further detail before considering the application of his definition of myth to the Gospels and the Gospel Jesus, as Jesus is called by Robertson.

Robertson writes: "To put the case broadly, at the end as at the beginning; Primary myth is but one of the primary modes in which men are collectively deceived; the habit of erroneous belief persists thus far in all stages of civilization; and wherever the result is a widespread hallucination, transmitted from age to age through channels of custom and emotional credulity, we are dealing with the same kind of psychological problem, and should apply to it the same kind of tests. The beliefs that Demeter wandered over the wide-wayed earth seeking for Persephone; that Isis searched mourning for the body of Osiris; that Apollo shot arrows of pestilence in punishment among the Greeks; that Athene miracul-

ously succoured her worshippers; that Perseus and Jesus and a hundred more were supernaturally conceived; that Jesus and Dionysos and Osiris gave men new knowledge and happiness in virtue of Godhood; that Tezcatlipoca and Yahweh were to be appeased by the eating, in reality or in symbol, of human flesh and blood; that Aesculapius and Jesus raised the dead; that Herakles and Dionysos and Jesus went down to Hades and returned; that Jesus and Mithra were buried in rock tombs and rose again; and that the sacrifice of Jesus brought salvation to mankind as did the annual sacrifice of the God-victim of the Khonds - these beliefs were set up and cherished by the same faculties for fiction and fallacy as have conserved the beliefs about the Amazons, Arthur and the Round Table, the primacy of the Pope, witchcraft, fairies, the medicinal value of charms, the couvade, the efficacy of prayer for rain, Jenny Geddes and her stool, Bruce's cave, Wallace's Tree, Julian's saying 'Thou has

Conquered, O Galilean', the liquefaction of the blood of St. Janarius, the miracle of Lourdes, the miracle of mediums, Boer outrages, the shooting of the apple on the head of his child by William Tell, and the consequent establishment of the Swiss confederation." ⁴⁸

V. The Gospel Myths: Introduction.

Our discussion of the progress of the science of mythology and in particular, the limitary and separatist views establishes a point which is vital in Robertson's reconstruction of the origin of Christianity, namely his approach to the Gospel. If the traditional distinction between mythical and mythless religion is erroneous; if myth can be considered as conscious, didactic fiction; and if the primitive mentality can be seen in an organic unitary manner, i.e. a relationship between myth and religion, myth and ethics, myth and magic, the way is prepared for an interpretation of Christianity which can be

48. Ibid., p. 126

accepted by the 'scientific naturalist'. "All historical religions", according to Robertson, "Run into and derive from other religions, the creeds of all mankind being simply phases of a continuous evolution."⁴⁹ If one considers the naturalness and interconnectedness of all religions, and the dependence of each religion on myth, why should Christianity or any other religion be considered as the "unique" religion? "The Jesuine system is only one phase in a continuous development of ancient religion, in which God after God, name after name, is associated with the same immemorial and dimly incomprehensible symbols."⁵⁰ It is a psychological habit, Robertson contends, which isolates Christianity from the other religions of antiquity. "The accredited personalities of Buddha and Jesus do make a very deep impression. But is it more forcible than that made anciently on men's mind by the stories of Osiris and Herakles,

49. Pagan Christs, p. 284.

50 Christianity and Mythology, p. 385

or than that made in India today by the story of the mystic teaching of Krishna? Is not the difference for us simply one of psychological habit? Is there any more evidence for a real-cult founding Buddha than for a real teaching Krishna?"⁵¹ When Christians insist on claiming uniqueness for one man, one that raised to manhood in one generation a humanity which had remained childlike through five thousand years of religious speculation, they are, according to Robertson, making a breach of all evolution. This theory, called by Robertson "psychological catastrophism" can be refuted by a fuller presentation of the proof that nothing the hypothetic Jesus of the Gospels nor his immediate followers represented any rare originality, whether of feeling or of fancy or of thought. How does Mr. Robertson go about impugning the historicity and uniqueness of the Gospel Jesus?

51. Ibid., p. 281.

Remembering his evolutionary view of religions and the constant interaction of myth and history, idea and fact, in the primitive mind, in the bible and even in a scientific period, his investigation of the genesis of Christianity is predetermined. But we should allow him to designate his methods. In his "Pagan Christs" he describes his approach to the New Testament in the following manner: "It is needless here to challenge afresh the historical value of the conflicting records, wherein slight details of no historical importance enters only to take varying forms for symbolical reasons. What we are concerned with is the source of the symbol-⁵²ism." Concerning the narratives, he comments: "We are not dealing with a generally credible and corroborated narrative in which a single episode raises surmise of extraneous factors not recognised in the text, but with one which begins and ends in absolutely and immortal myth and is stamped with supernaturalism in every

52. "Pagan Christs" p. 120

53
 sentence." But if the New Testament narratives are of no value in accounting for the rise of Christianity and the confusing historical accounts are not to be understood as varying reports of factual events, what source or supplementary source is to yield a "scientific picture of the genesis of the movement?" We are, it is clearly stated in his two works, to explain Christianity on the basis of its antecedents and more particularly, on the assumption that the narratives are mythical extensions by way of explaining multiple understandings of ritual practices which pre-date the Christian cultus. It is acknowledged, according to Robertson, "that a great deal of the heterogeneous narrative of the biblical books has long been satisfactorily identified as normal primitive mythology - as clearly so as other portions have been shown to be purposive sacredotal fiction - and that when rational tests are more rigorously and more vigilantly

applied, much that still passes as history will probably be resolved into manipulated myth."⁵⁴

But what is the assumption here? What are the rational tests to be applied? Some clarification of his ground plan may be seen in the following words which illustrate why the New Testament narratives are not to be examined:

"We ought not to look to the current narrative of the origins of a rite for the historical fact, but to the rite for the narrative."⁵⁵ "Proceed-

ing on the main that the myth is always long posterior to the rite which it pretends to explain, we must suppose that before the composition of the legends concerning the Titans and the birth, death and re-birth of Dionysus, such a primitive rite as the legend describes had actually been performed."⁵⁶ The point which is being elucidated concerns Robertson's belief that ritual usages are the fountains of myth and that myths are framed to explain the rite. In his "Christianity and Mythology" Robertson's

54. Christianity & Mythology, p. 99

55. Pagan Christs, p. 147

56. Ibid., p. 132

approach to myth and the source of myth is succinctly stated: "So far as myths consist of explanation of ritual their value is altogether secondary; and it may be affirmed with confidence that in almost every case the myth was derived from the ritual, and not the ritual from the myth; for the ritual was fixed and the myth was variable; the ritual was obligatory, and faith in the myth was at the discretion of the worshipper."⁵⁷

Before pursuing our discussion of Robertson's treatment of "the Gospel Jesus", let us pause to take stock of his arguments. There are two points which delineate Robertson's approach to Christianity, his treatment of the narrative and his account of the ritual which the mythical narratives describe. Firstly, he is not interested in the narrative itself. The historical inaccuracies and contradictions in the New Testament records are not to be accounted

57. Christianity & Mythology, p. 178

for by estimating the narrative but through discernment of the rituals which have been mythically described in the narrative.

Harmonization of the conflicting accounts, particularly those describing the crucifixion of the Gospel Jesus, may be done on the basis of the existence of a ritual or rituals of crucifixion or quasi-crucifixion, variants of which have figured the two procedures of breaking the legs of the victim and giving him a narcotic. The conflicting accounts of the two incidents being insoluble and unhistorical on any other level, the only clue, accordingly, is a psychological hypothesis of a known ritual of a crucified Saviour God who had for universally recognized reasons to appear to suffer as a willing victim.

Along with this sacrificing ritual existing about the beginning of the Christian era, there

is a complementary theory of human sacrifice who, as being specifically Divine, is the subject of a Eucharist. The sacrifice of a divine victim and the eucharist are combined in the Mediterranean world. The Eucharist stories, according to Robertson, stood both in the myth and in the nature of the cult in the closest relation to the act of human sacrifice; and to explain the latter without reference to the former is to miss part of the problem.

1. The Crucifixion-Myth: A Mystery-Drama.

Robertson's theory of the crucifixion-myth is summarized in two main propositions which are stated thus: (1) "That the Gospel story of the Last Supper, the Agony, the Betrayal, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection is demonstrably not originally a narrative, but a mystery-drama which has been transcribed with a minimum of

modification": and (2) "That the mystery-drama was inferrably an evolution from a Palestinian rite of human sacrifice in which the annual victim was 'Jesus, the Son of the Father'"⁵⁸ The second proposition involves three distinct inquiries. When once the dramatic character of the Passion-story is demonstrated, it is necessary to show that the details are derived from a ritual of human sacrifice. Next, it must be shown that the Jews were familiar with human sacrifice, or better still actually practising this barbaric rite at the time when Christianity arose. Finally, grounds must be produced for inferring that such a practice was associated with an ancient pre-Christian cult of a hero-god called Jesus or Joshua. The first proposition will be the subject of our first inquiry.

That the concluding sections of the gospel-

58. Pagan Christs, Preface to Second Edition, p.XI

-narrative are demonstrably a transcript of a mystery-drama is supported from two internal characteristics of the narrative; the extraordinary compression of events and the utter absence of descriptive detail. The first proposition entails the crowding of the betrayal and trial into one night and the "unity of time" presupposed in the transcription of the events. The second contention involves the avoidance of descriptive detail in the narrative. The transitions are made from place to place, e.g. from the upper room to Gethsemane, without any of the descriptive touches characteristic of ordinary narrative, such as places or persons. The rapidity with which the events transpire and the improbability of some of the particular events recorded warrants Robertson's thesis, according to his reasoning. The absence of conversational details and the rapid transitions

effected in the movements stamps, according to Robertson, the stories as unhistorical. These omissions would not have been made if the events were historical. On these and other minor points Robertson concludes that the enactment of the mystery-play was "the very womb and genesis of the whole Christian fight."⁵⁹

Robertson's thesis at this point supposes the Jews to have had a religious use and sense of Drama parallel to Greek-mystery dramas. Also, his hypothesis supposes that the Gospels were decidedly Hellenistic and not Palestinian and Jewish. Mr. Robertson has rightly discerned the dramatic qualities belonging to Mark's Gospel but he does not extend this quality throughout Mark and the other Gospels. This dramatic quality is a feature of the Gospels not confined to the last chapters or to the crucifixion-resurrection events. Robertson contends that the

59. Ibid., p. 203

five-act story of the Supper, the Agony, the Capture, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection was added to the earlier sections of the Gospels which described the teaching and public ministry of Jesus. The mystery-drama is separate from all that is told of Jesus as teacher and healer. But it is questionable that any modern biblical critic would agree with Robertson on the point that the passion-narrative is a later addition to the Gospel of Jesus. On the contrary, most critics believe the last two chapters in Mark (XIV and XV) belong to the earlier stratum of the traditions concerning Jesus. There was, according to biblical critics, a "Primitive Gospel" with no story of the passion. Moreover, there never was a story of the passion which did not imply a knowledge of the events of the public ministry of Jesus both in Galilee and Jerusalem. A theory which assumes

that the story of the Cross comes from a group which knew only the mystery-cult of a dying and rising God and which was unaware of a divine teacher, finds no support in textual evidence and literary analysis.

Robertson's second contention concerns the sacrificial development on which the crucifixion drama is supposedly based. If the story of the Cross is not dramatic in character it may still be sacrificial in origin. The events, real or supposed, that form the subject-matter of the narrative may reflect an elaborate ritual of human sacrifice. We turn now to consider the claim that "anthropological research leads us to trace the gospel-story of the crucifixion back to a ritual of many variants in the East." It is assumed that the gospel-drama took the place of an actual sacrifice, and Robertson in his discussion points to probable instances of such

figured in pre-Christian sacrificial rites are:

ibid., p. 187

a substitution of drama for ritual in the
 history of human sacrifice in Rhodes.⁶⁰ But
 his thesis does not rest on this individual
 instance. Even if there is no record of any
 modification or transformation of human
 sacrifice into drama, the internal evidence
 from certain features of the gospel-story
 would still suffice to confer some probability
 on the sacrificial theory. We shall summarize
 Robertson's views: In the first place, he
 attempted to show that several particulars in
 the narrative of the Cross correspond or coincide
 with details of human sacrifice among savages
 the world over. Most features of the gospel
 passion-narratives can be accounted for as
 definite sacrificial practices, and what features
 are unintelligible can soon be taken in account
 if their sacrificial origin is elaborated.

The details in the gospel narrative which
 figured in pre-Christian sacrificial rites are:

60. Ibid., p. 187

the crucifixion of two thieves along with Jesus,
 or the sacrifice of three victims;⁶¹ the wine
 mingled with gall which was offered to Jesus on
 his way to the Cross hints at some such sacri-
 ficial ritual; the breaking of the victims'
 legs and the piercing of the side of Jesus with
 a spear⁶² refer to a sacrificial detail borrowed
 from a sacrificial ritual, e. g. the Khonds;
 the price paid to Judas by the priests comes
 from a sacrificial system in which the victim
 had to be purchased. Robertson links together
 features of the gospel-narrative to attain the
 proof of the one end of the story - the apparent
 willingness of the victim to suffer. He arrives
 at the following scheme of development which
 seemed to him convincing, because it was so
 logical. The scheme is given in Mr. Robertson's
 words:

1) Originally a 'willing victim' is desiderated;
 and willingness is secured by a bribe of a period

61. Ibid., p. 115

62. Ibid., p. 121.

of ease and licence. old sacrifices of an

2) This kind of victim becoming hard to procure, one 'bought with a price' was substituted, as representing a voluntary offering by his owner or owners. animal it

3) Still seeking the semblance of a 'willing' sacrifice, the sacrificers first broke the limbs of the human victim. But reformers would

4) Feeling (on some reformer's urging) that such a mangled victim was an unseemly sacrifice, they resorted to narcotics. For a vote on

5) At a higher stage of social evolution, recoiling from the sacrifice of an innocent victim, men fell back upon condemned criminals, and these in turn are stupefied, from humane or other motives. different rituals to secure the

6) Being next persuaded that the stupefied victim was either an unseemly or an inefficacious, because non-suffering, sacrifice, or being on other grounds inclined to abandon human sacrifice,

they substituted the old sacrifice of an animal, giving it in certain cases human attributes, and in others some of the privileges formerly accorded to the taboo human victim. In the case of the animal it was not as a rule felt necessary either to break bones or to use narcotics, though either plan might be used. But reformers would stress the avoidance of bone-breaking by way of showing the superiority of the new sacrifice; hence the need for a veto on imitations of the old practice." ⁶³

Robertson was convinced that many details of the story of the Cross correspond closely to the various modes employed at different periods and in different rituals to secure the willingness of the victim. The parallels presented so far explain why the victim was betrayed and bought for a price; why he receives

63. Ibid., p. 156

a narcotic and a spearthrust; and why the legs of his comrades are broken though his own are carefully kept intact. It remains to explain on the basis of sacrificial parallels the royal death and the mocking and scourging of the victim. Two rites in Rhodes and Phoenicia supply this detail. The Jews copied from these rituals the ceremony of crucifying a malefactor who, after masquerading as a king in a crown and royal robe, was hanged or crucified in the character of human.⁶⁴

This brings us to another typical reconstruction which must be given at length in Mr. Robertson's words. He says: "We have now followed our historic clues far enough to warrant a constructive theory. Indeed, it frames itself when we colligate our main date. As thus:

1) In the slaying of the Kronian victim at Rhodes, we have an ancient Semitic human sacrifice maintained into the historic period,

64. Ibid., p. 161

by the expedient of taking as annual victim a criminal already condemned to death.

2) In Semitic mythology, Kronos 'whom the Phoenicians call Israel' sacrifices his son Ieoud, 'the only', after putting upon him royal robes.

3) The Feast of Kronos is the Saturnalia, in which elsewhere a mock-king plays a prominent part; and as Kronos was among the Semites identified with Moloch - 'king', the victim would be ostensibly either a king or a king's son. A trial and degradation were likely accessories.

4) Supposing the victim in the Rhodian Saturnalia to figure as Ieoud, he would be ipso facto Barabbas, 'the son of the father', and in the terms of the case he was a condemned criminal. At the same time, in terms of the myth, he would figure in royal robes.

5) In any case, the myth being Semitic, it is morally certain that among the many cases of human sacrifice in the Graeco-Semitic world, the Rhodian rite was not unique. And as the name 'Ieoud' besides signifying 'the only' was ritually identical with the Greek and Hebrew names for Judah (son of 'Israel') and Jew (Yehuda, Ioudaios), it was extremely likely among the Jews of the Dispersion to be regarded as having special application to their race, which in their sacred books actually figured as the Only-Begotten Son of the Father God, and as having undergone special suffering.

6) That the Rhodian rite, Semitic in origin, was at some points specially co-incident with Jewish conceptions of sacrifice, is proved by the detail of leading the prisoner outside the city gates. This is expressly laid down in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as a ritual condition of the sacrificial death of Jesus.⁶⁵"

65. Ibid., p. 186 f.

In summary, according to Robertson, the following features of the Gospel-story have been discovered in different forms of human sacrifice; the betrayal for money, the trial and degradation of a mock-king, the use of a narcotic, the draught of wine (two items unnecessarily separated in the Gospels), the breaking of the legs, the spear-thrust, the royal dignity attributed to the sufferer, and above all the custom of regarding the sufferer as the only begotten son of the Father. All these elements in the Gospel-story of the Cross are links in the chain of evidence which points to a human sacrifice as the basis of the Christian mystery-play.

Then, on Robertson's showing, or according to his reasoning, human sacrifice evolved and certain usages in relation to human sacrifice are supposed to have succeeded one another, culminating in the ritual depicted in the Gospels.

While it is difficult to examine each of Robertson's elaborations and chains of inference in detail, it has been pointed out by his critics that these levels of human sacrifice were not successive; rather were many aspects co-existent. There seems to be no reason for Robertson's developmental scheme, e.g. limb breaking to be a later practice than purchase, nor purchase a later practice than licence. What Robertson has done in his researches into human sacrifice was to trace certain practices among the Khonds and certain other practices among more civilized peoples, and then to link these together by an arbitrary and unsatisfactory principle, viz. development from lower to higher forms of sacrifice.

It seems that Robertson has presented a hybrid rite which could never at any period of human history have been performed. In the first instance, Robertson has assumed that the

victims were malefactors. It follows, then, on his own theory, and in the nature of the case, that the victims could not have been "bought with a price". Consequently, the betrayal, as he interprets it, cannot belong to the same ritual as the crucifixion itself. Nor will it do to say one victim was "bought with a price" and the others were malefactors. For all three were executed as malefactors, and the two practices cannot be combined. Furthermore, Robertson is anxious to point out that the use of criminals comes in when men are civilized enough to revolt from the use of innocent victims bought with a price. The Jews can scarcely have been at one and the same time so far civilized as to insist on substituting two criminals for two victims out of three, and so conservative as to insist on retaining the old inhuman system for the third.

Again, Robertson would have us believe first,

that the crucifixion was an august ritual in which the victim perished in royal robes as the only-begotten son of a king, and at the same time, the whole procedure was a mock-sacrifice in which the victim is tried and degraded and expires without any royal robes. Now the crucifixion cannot have been at one and the same time the solemn offering up of the dearest emblem of royalty, and the practically non-sacrificial execution of the poor mock-king of the Saturnalia, nor can the victim have perished at once with royal robes and without them. What then can be said of Robertson's theory which proposes to combine in one rite, the divergent practices and motives (1) of the very primitive and degraded Khonos, and (2) of the annual sacrifice of a criminal to Kronos in Rhodes, and (3) of the custom of sacrificing children, especially royal children at times of crisis, which once

prevailed in Phoenicia, and (4) of the entirely disparate treatment of the mock-king in the Saturnalia? Simply this: Robertson has sought far and wide for the least item of information to substantiate his primary thesis, e.g. the performance of an annual mystery-drama and the Palestinian rite of human sacrifice in which the annual victim was "Jesus, the Son of the Father".

But enough of Robertson's speculations on the mystery-drama which has been transcribed into narrative form in the New Testament. One point is clear: The Christian Gospels are a transcript of a mock murder of the Sun-god Joshua annually performed in secret by the Jews of Jerusalem. Let us turn next to Robertson's ideas on the pre-Christian cult of a hero-god called Jesus or Joshua.

2. The Crucifixion Myth: Pre-Christian Jesus.

Remembering Robertson's approach to the New

Testament narratives, e.g. his scepticism of their historical veracity and his interest in the rite which preceded the mythic formulations, we are now prepared to search out his solution to the origin of the Christian faith and movement. In his "Christianity and Mythology" he says: "The one tenable historic hypothesis left to us at this stage is that of a preliminary Jesus 'B.C.', a vague cult-founded such as the Jesus ben Pandira of the Talmud, put to death for (perhaps anti-Judaic) teachings now lost; round whose movement there might have gradually clustered the survivals of an ancient solar or other worship of a Babe Joshua, son of Miriam." ⁶⁶

There are many hypotheses in this quotation. Let us take them one by one to discover Robertson's reasoning. First, a few preliminary remarks. He says in his "Pagan Christs" that: "the Christian system is a patchwork of a hundred suggestions

66. Christianity & Mythology, p. 284

drawn from pagan art and ritual usage."^{67.}

And.. "Christism was only neo-paganism grafted
on Judaism."⁶⁸ And in another place he writes:

"The figure of Jesus is an alloy of Dionysus, Osiris, Adonis, Krishna, Aesculopuios, and fifty other ancient gods and demigods, with the all-important Sun-God-Saviour Joshua, son of Miriam; that the story of Peter rests on a pagan basis of myth."⁶⁹

It is clear from these quotations that Robertson has searched the Mediterrean world for parallels to the Gospel stories. The slightest resemblance to an event or person in the Gospel is enough to validate his theorizings. But the important question is: Why does he and his colleagues, W.B. Smith and Arthur Drews select the myth of the Sun-God Joshua as the core of the pre-Christian Jesus myth? It is to be remembered that Robertson regards the mythical Joshua-Jesus as a "composite myth", around which clustered all the myths of the pagan world. These

67. Pagan Christs, p. 305

68. Ibid., p. 338

69. Ibid., p. 340

Christ-myth theorists believe Jesus, or Joshua, was the name under which the expected Messiah was honoured in a certain Jewish secret society which had its headquarters in Jerusalem about the beginning of our era. By Joshua or Jesus, we are not to understand the personage concerning whose exploits the Book of Joshua was composed, but a Sun-God. The Gospels are a veiled account of the sufferings and exploits of this Sun-God. Dr. Drews, also an advocate of the pre-Christian Jesus, says concerning Joshua: "Joshua is apparently an ancient Ephraimitic god of the Sun and Fruitfulness, who stood in close relation to the Feast of the Pasch and to the custom of ⁷⁰circumcision."

Let us follow some of the steps by which Robertson and others arrive at Joshua's divine status and further, Joshua's identification with the Jesus portrayed in the Gospel narratives.

70. Drews, Arthur, "Christ Myth", p.57, in the German text (first ed. 1909, p.21)

First, Robertson thought we might piece together some hints from the book of Joshua. Joshua, it seems, has some of the attributes of the Sun-God; was, in fact, a solar deity. The reference to the circumcision and the Passover in the book of Joshua, Chapter V, suggests that his name was anciently associated with these ordinances. It is believed that Joshua reinstated the rite of circumcision and thus in accordance with ancient mythological ideas has been regarded as the god of the rite. The miracles of making the sun stand still is a greater prodigy than any attributed to Moses, and he must have ranked as high as Moses. These things (institution of circumcision and the miracle of the sun standing still) are not to be explained save on the view that he held divine status.⁷¹

Secondly, Joshua, we are told, was probably "an Ephraimite deity" analogous to Joseph whose legend

71. Pagan Christs, p. 163

has such close resemblance to the myth of
 "Tammuz-Adonis." This point would run as
 follows: Joseph is an Ephraimite god; Joshua
 is the same. Joseph resembles Adonis; there-
 fore Joshua may have been like Adonis.

In the next place, in Exodus XXIII, 20-23,
 God promises to send an angel to go before
 Israel and bring the people into the place
 prepared for them. God's name is in or on
 the angel, and if the people obey him he will
 drive out from before them the Amorites and
 Hittites and Perizzites and Canaanites and
 Jebusites. Now in Joshua XXIV, 11, the same
 list appears with the addition of the Girgash-
 ites, as representing the conquests effected
 by the Lord through Joshua. Must we not
 conclude, then, that Joshua is pseudo-
 historically identified with the promised
 72
 angel?

The next stage in the argument must be

carefully watched. Joshua was identified with the angel by some person or persons unknown, presumably when they noticed the parallel between Exodus XXIII and Joshua XXIV. But the angel "in virtue of his possession of themagical 'name' is in the Talmud identified with the mystic Metatron, who is in turn identifiable with the Logos."⁷³ We may here interpose that the mystic Metatron is by some derived from the Greek meta thronon - "behind the throne" and by others is supposed to be a corruption of Mithras. The more generally accepted view connects the name with the Latin, Metator - guide. Metatron belongs to the Roman period of Judaism. This mysterious power behind the throne is sometimes identified with Michael. However, the points established are that some readers of the books of Exodus and Joshua may have identified Joshua with the angel. Some Rabbinic authorities in the Talmud actually do identify the angel with

73. Ibid., p. 163

the mystic Metatron which others again identify with the Logos. We are now ready for the amazing conclusion. "Thus the name Joshua - Jesus is already in the Hexateuch associated with the conceptions of Logos, Son of God and Messiah."⁷⁴

But if this evidence is not satisfactory, Robertson offers more proof. There is a Kabbalistic prayer attached to the Jewish liturgy for the New Year, which contains an obscure reference to Joshua as Prince of the presence, whatever that may mean. Then, according to Robertson, a Mr. Hershon in his Talmudical commentary on Genesis drew attention to the fact that according to some Jews "the week of the Son" (circumcision) was called the rite of "Jesus the Son".⁷⁵ Great weight attaches to these items of evidence for "neither Jewish nor Christian commentators latterly face the fact that in Jewish Talmudic tradition there was

74. Ibid., p. 164

75. Ibid., p. 166

a 'Jesus, the Prince of the Presence' and a rite of the Week of the Son' called by some ⁷⁶ 'the Week of Jesus the Son.'" The first item confirms the identification of Joshua with the Angel, and the second confirms the association of his name with circumcision.

But we are not at the end of our resources. There is a Persian tradition which makes Joshua the son of Miriam. Then in the Hexateuch Joshua was the son of Nun, and Nun means "fish" and a fish was an early Christian symbol. Further, in Jude 5, "I will put you in remembrance how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not", we must accept the variant reading "Jesus" as original and substitute it for "the Lord" and affirm without question that by "Jesus" is meant the Joshua of the Old Testament. It will follow from verse 6 that Joshua must have been conceived as a divine or supernatural being,

76. Jesus & Judas, p. 207

since in verse 6 he judged fallen angels, and sitting in judgment on fallen angels was a function of the heavenly Messiah according to the book of Enoch.

The case for the pre-Christian Jesus may be rounded off by citing a passage from the Sibylline Oracles where the crucified Jesus of the Christians is confused with the Joshua of the Old Testament, and by recalling instances of the use of the name of Jesus in exorcism.

But we could spend much time organizing Robertson's arguments and even disproving his theses on biblical grounds, e.g. analyzing texts and comparing philological similarities. Instead of this method, let us pass to the general presupposition of the author. Robertson's motive in his treatment of Joshua and the origin of Christianity is transparent. He selected from the book of Joshua those items which helped him to imagine an Ephraimite deity like unto the

Christian Jesus. Do the Christians place Jesus above Moses? Then the Ephraimite Joshua must have had a divine status equal if not superior to that of Moses. Is the Christian Jesus associated with the Passover? Then the Ephraimite Joshua must have been closely associated with the Passover. Did the Christian Jesus reinstitute or, as would rather appear, institute the rite of baptism? Then Joshua must have reinstated or, as would rather appear, instituted circumcision. Was baptism in the name of Jesus? Then circumcision must have been the rite of Joshua the son. Is Jesus judge of men and angels? Then Jude must have regarded Joshua in the same light. Was Jesus regarded as the Logos? Then already in the Hexateuch Joshua must have been so regarded. Did Jesus die and rise again? Then the Ephraimite deity, Joshua, must have resembled Adonis. Furthermore, in his anxiety to connect the pre-Christian Jesus with

a sacrificial ritual, Robertson turned to the story of Abraham and Isaac for assistance.

"The Syrian form of the name, Jeschu, closely resembles the Hebrew name Yishak, which we read Isaac, and that Isaac was in earlier myth sacrificed by his father is a fair assumption.

We have here the inferrable norm of an ancient God-sacrifice, Abraham's original Godhead being tolerably certain, like that of Israel." ⁷⁷ But

the weakness of Robertson's linguistic argument is sufficiently exposed in the following words of Rendel Harris, as quoted by H.G. Wood in his "Did Christ Really Live". Dr. Harris writes:

"For the identification of Isaac (Yitzchak) and Joshua (Yehoshua), Mr. Robertson should have adduced some parallels. It is true that if we take the English spelling of Isaac and the Arabic spelling of Jesus, we do obtain some similarity. In the Hebrew, however, the two names do not agree, either in consonants or

77. Pagan Christs, p. 267

vowels, except as regards the initial letter.

The proper parallel to be quoted would be Romeo and Rosemary, or better still, Monmouth and

Macedon.⁷⁸ Mr. Wood adds: "No philology, however elastic, will enable us to merge 'Jesus, the son of the Father' in 'Isaac, the son of Abraham'. Mr. Robertson would have appreciated the Shakespearian allusion, however reluctant he would have been to admit its devastating effect on his argument.

At this point we must attempt to limit our treatment of Robertson's arguments for the existence of a pre-Christian Jesus God. He appeals his case by discussing references in the "Apocalypse of St. John" and "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles". We shall content ourselves with a brief summary of the "core" of the "composite myth" of the pre-Christian Jesus cult. In the next place, some of the elements in the

78. Wood, H.G. "Did Christ Really Live", p.140-141

mystery-drama (a drama which ceased to be acted when it was reduced to writing as part of the gospel) are deserving of our attention. This point is clear: The central event of the annual mystery-play reduced to writing was the annual death and resurrection of a solar or vegetation god, whose attributes and career were borrowed from the cults of Osiris, Adonis, Dionysus and company. We look now to some of the situations in the stories of the gods which were incorporated in the pre-Christian Jesus cult.

(1) The Virgin Birth:

Robertson writes: "In the special machinery of the Joseph and Mary myth - the warning in a dream and the abstention of the husband - we have a simple duplication of the relations of the father and mother of Plato, the former being warned in a dream by Apollo, so that the child was virgin-born."⁷⁹

79. Pagan Christs, p. 293

Again, just as the Christians chose a "solar date" for the birthday of Jesus, so the Platonists, according to Robertson "placed the ~~master's~~ birthday on that of Apollo - that is, either at Christmas or at the vernal equinox." 80

With a mere change of names we could write of Plato what Robertson writes of Jesus. Let us do it: "The gospel Jesus (read dialogist Plato) is as enigmatic from a humanist as from a supernaturalist point of view. Miraculously born, to the knowledge of many (read of his nephew Speusippus of Clearchus whose testimony 'belongs to Plato's generation', of Anaxilides the historian and others), he reappears as a natural man even in the opinion of his parents (read of nephew Speusippus and the rest); the myth will not cohere. Rationally considered, he (Plato) is an unintelligible portent; A Galilean (read Athenian) of the common people, critically untraceable till his full manhood, when he ⁸¹ suddenly appears as a cult-founder".

80. Ibid., p. 308

81. Ibid., p. 282

(2) Other incidents in the Gospels borrowed from
Pagan sources:

Why did the solar God Joshua-Jesus scourge the money-changers out of the temple? Answer: Because it is told of Apollonius of Tyana "that he expelled from the cities of the left bank of the Hellespont some sorcerers who were extorting money for a great propitiatory sacrifice to prevent earthquakes".⁸²

Why did Jesus make a scourge of cords with which to drive the sheep and oxen out of the temple? Answer: "Because in the Assyrian and Egyptian systems of scourge-bearing god is a very common figure on the monuments .. it is specially associated with Osiris, the Saviour, Judge and Avenger. A figure of Osiris, revered as 'Chrestos' the benign God, would suffice to set up among Christists as erstwhile among Pagans the demand for an explanation".⁸³

82. Ibid., p. 285

83. Ibid., p. 297

84. Ibid., p. 303

Who was Peter? Answer: An understudy of Mithras, who in the monuments bears two keys; or of Janus, who bears the keys and the rod, and as opener of the year (hence the name January) stands at the head of the twelve months.

Why did Peter deny Jesus? Answer: Because Janus was called bifrons.

Who was Joseph? Answer: Joseph must be regarded as "a partial revival of the ancient adoration of the God Joseph as well as of that of the God Daoud".⁸⁴ He was also, seeing that he took Mary and her child on an ass into Egypt, a reminiscence; or, shall we not say, an explanation of "the beelbe old man leading an ass in the sacred procession of Isis, as described by Apuleius in his Metamorphoses".

Who was Mary, the mother of Jesus? Robertson and Drews believe Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a goddess. This Mary appears among the Persians

84. Ibid., p. 303

as the "virgin" mother of Mithras. As Myrrha she is the mother of the Syrian Adonis; as Semiramis, mother of the Babylonian Ninus (Marduk). In the Arabic legend she appears under the name of Mirzam as mother of the mythical saviour Joshua; while the Old Testament gives this name to the virgin sister of that Joshua who was so closely related to Moses; and according to Eusebius, Merris was the name of the Egyptian princess who found Moses in a basket and became his foster mother.

Who were the twelve disciples, or where did the idea of twelve disciples originate?

Answer: The apostles are Zodiacal signs, and their leader is Janus, the opener of the year. 85

Why was Jesus crucified? Answer: "The story of the Crucifixion may rest on the remote datum of an actual crucifixion of Jesus Ben Pandira, the possible Jesus of Paul, dead long before, and

85. Ibid., p. 347

87. Ibid., p. 379

88. Ibid., p. 354

represented by no preserved biography or
 teachings whatever".⁸⁶ But this Jesus Ben
 Pandira was hanged some hundred years before
 the opening of the Christian era in the Gospels.
 Robertson is convinced that this Pauline Jesus,
 who taught nothing and did nothing, was "a
 doctrinal evolution from the Jesus of a hundred
 years before".⁸⁷ We must "perforce assume such
 a long evolution". Otherwise it would not be
 "intelligible that, even if he had been only
 hanged after stoning, he should by that time
 have come to figure mythically as crucified".⁸⁸
 Robertson is quite ready to admit that "if the
 Jesus of Paul were really a personage put to
 death under Pontius Pilate, the Epistles (of
 Paul) would give us the strongest ground for
 accepting an actual crucifixion". But, alas,
 the Jesus put to death under Pontius Pilate is
 no more than an allegroy of Joshua, the ancient
 Palestinian Sun-god, rolled up with a vegetation-

86. Christianity & Mythology, p. 378

87. Ibid., p. 379

88. Ibid., p. 364

god and other mythical beings, and slain afresh once a year. There is thus no alternative left but to identify Paul's crucified Jesus with Jesus Ben Pandira. But how did Robertson arrive at his certainty that Jesus Ben Pandira died in the reign of Alexander Jannaeus, B.C. 106-79? Answer: From the Talmudic tradition which alludes to the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. Dr. Samuel Kraus, in his exhaustive study of Talmudic notices of Jesus of Nazareth (*Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen*, Berlin, 1902, p. 242) assumes as a fact beyond dispute that the Jeschu or Joshua Ben Pandira (or Ben Stada or Ben Satda) mentioned in the Toldoth Jeschu is Jesus of Nazareth. In the Toldoth he is set in the reign of Tiberius. This Toldoth is not earlier than A.D. 400, and took its information from the pseudo-Hegesippus. The Spanish historian Abraham b. Daud (about A.D. 1100) already noticed that the Talmudic

tradition alluded to by Robertson set the birth of Jesus of Nazareth a hundred years too early; but the same tradition corrects itself in that it assigns Salome Alexandri to Alexander Jannai as his wife, and then, confusing her with Queen Helena the proselyte, brings the incident down to the right date. "The truth is" says Dr. Kraus (p.183) "We have got to do here with a chronological error. Lightfoot, to whose "Horae Hebraicae" Robertson refers in his footnote (p.363), also assumed that by Jesus Ben Pandira, or son of Panthera, the Talmudists intended Jesus of Nazareth, Celsus (about A.D. 170) attested a Jewish tradition that Jesus Christ was Mary's son by a Roman soldier named Panthera, and later on even Christian writers worked Panthera into Mary's pedigree. Such is the origin of the Talmudic tradition exploited by Robertson. It is almost worthless; but, so far as it goes, it overthrows Robertson's hypothesis.

Concerning the teaching in the Gospels, Robertson and his friends contend that such teaching was inspired by parallel passages in the Talmud and the Apocrypha, and these myth-theorists argue for the priority of the Talmud and such other documents. The Talmudic parallels to any part of the Sermon on the Mount cannot, according to Robertson, conceivably have been borrowed from the Christian gospels.

We could continue for several pages to describe the myths which Christianity borrowed from paganism and to show how the Christian legend, in its present terminology, is demonstrably an adaption of a mass of pre-Christian myths, we have endeavoured to point to the centre of the pre-Christian cult, e.g. Joshua, the Sun-god, who was annually crucified, and we have shown from Robertson's pages the parallels to several incidents narrated in the New Testament.

Before we can close this chapter, we should like to pass over to another Christ-myth theorist, W.B. Smith. There are three arguments in his writings which deserve some mention: the name Jesus of Nazareth which signifies a cult movement; the statement "the things concerning Jesus" designating a mythical god; and, the "brethren of our Lord" or the term "brothers" of our Lord, meaning the spiritual fellowship of many instead of actually existing brothers of Jesus. In the first instance, Smith in his "Pre-Christian Jesus" (Der Vorchristliche Jesus) drew upon the passages in Acts XVIII, 24, to substantiate his main argument. The phrase which occurs in this passage "the things concerning Jesus" refers not, as the context would seem to require, to the history and passion of Jesus of Galilee, but to the mysteries of a prehistoric Saviour-God of the same name. The name Jesus, according to Smith,

means what the word Essene also meant, a Healer. Smith tries to find support for his conjecture in a chance phrase in a magical papyrus of Paris, No. 3009, edited first by Wessely, and later by Dieterich. This papyri was supposed to have been composed around the second century B.C. Because Jesus is referred to as Hebrew God and exorcism was practised in his name, Smith thinks he is warranted in saying that a pre-Christian cult worshipped Jesus and the "things concerning Jesus" refers not to Jesus of Galilee but to Jesus which existed prior to that time.

A critic of Smith's theories attempts a paraphrase of the passages in Acts which is drawn from the speculations of Drews and Robertson. We may quote this as an illustration of the meaning which Smith derived from this reference to Jesus in Acts.

"A certain sun-myth hero, as his name Apollos

signifies, came to Ephesus, which, being the centre of Astarte or Aphrodite worship, was obviously the right place for such a hero to pilgrimage unto. He was mighty in the Jewish Scriptures, and had been instructed in the way of the Lord Joshua, the Sun-God-Saviour of ancient Ephraim. He spake and taught carefully the things concerning this Joshua (or Adonis, or Osiris, or Dionysus or Vegetation-god, or Horus - for you can take your choice among these and many more). But he knew only of the pre-historic ritual of baptism of Cadmus or of Oannus-Ea, the ancient culture-god of the Babylonians, who appeared in the form of a Fish-man, teaching me by day and at night going down into the sea - in his capacity of Sun-god. This Cadmus or Oannes was worshipped at Jerusalem in the cryptic sect of the Christists or Jesuists under the name of John. His friend Apollos, the solar demi-god, began to speak boldly in the synagogue. Priscilla

(presumably Cybelle, mother of the gods), and Aquila, the Eagle-God or Jupiter heard him; she took him forthwith and expounded to him the way of Jahve who also was identical with Joshua, the Sun-god, with Osiris, etc."⁸⁹

Another basis of Smith's pre-Christian Jesus theory is the prophecy in Matthew 2:23, to the effect that the Messiah should be called a Nazoraean. This prophecy is declared to have been fulfilled in so far as Jesus was taken by his parents to live at Nazareth in Galilee. What prophecy the evangelist had in mind is not known. But W.B. Smith jumps to the conclusion that the Christians were identical with the sect of Nazoraei mentioned in Epiphanius as going back to an age before Christ; and he appeals in confirmation of this hypothesis to Acts XXIV,5, where the following of Jesus is described as that of the Nazoraei. This sect of pre-Christian Nazoraei worshipped a God Joshua.

89. Conybeare, F. "The Historical Christ", p.36.

Many critics have examined this contention (Goguel, Guigenbert) and they have decided that the evangelist (Matthew) meant by Nazorean a dweller in Nazareth, and that he gave the word that sense when he met with it in an anonymous prophecy.

Finally, W.B. Smith hopes to substantiate his thesis of a pre-Christian Jesus cult by reference to the passages in the New Testament which concern the "brothers" or "brethren" of Jesus. Smith believes that when Paul calls James a brother of the Lord, he does not "imply any family kinship" but one of a "class of earnest Messianists, zealots of obedience" to the Mosaic Law. Smith appeals in confirmation of his conjecture to the apostrophe of Jesus when his mother and brethren came to arrest him as an ecstatic (Mark III, 31-35):-

Who is my mother and my brethren?...whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and sister and mother.

He also appeals to 1 Corinthians IX, 5, where Paul alludes to "the brethren of the Lord" as claiming a right to lead about a wife that is a sister. And he argues that those who in Corinth, to the imperilling of Christian unity, said - some: "I am of Cephas"; others: "I am of Christ"; others: "I am of Apollos" were known as brethren of Christ, of Cephas, etc. It is certainly true that Paul and other early Christian writers regarded the members of the Church as brethren or as sisters, just as the members of monastic society have ever styled themselves brothers and sisters of one another. But there is no example of a believer being called a brother of the Lord or of Jesus. The passage in Mark and its parallels are, according to Smith, purely legendary and allegorical, since he denies that Jesus ever lived; and he had no right, therefore, to appeal to them in order to decide what Paul intended by the phrase when he

used it, as before, not of a mythical but of a concrete case. However, if Smith is intent on appealing to the Gospels, then he must allow equal weight to such a text as Matthew XIII, 55: "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?"

Did all these people, we may ask, including his mother, stand in a merely spiritual relationship to Jesus? But W.B. Smith is anxious to prove that Jesus did not live and to admit that he had "blood brothers" would damage his initial presupposition. Smith appeals to Jerome (Ecce Deus) to validate his case. Jerome says, according to Smith:

"No less an authority than Jerome has expressed the correct idea on this point. In commenting on Galatians, 1, 19, he says (in sum): "James was called the Lord's brother on account of his high character, his incomparable faith, and his extraordinary wisdom; the other apostles are also called

brothers' (John XX,17)"⁹⁰

But at this point Smith withholds from his readers the fact that Jerome regarded James the brother of Jesus as his first cousin. It is just as difficult for a mythical personage to have a first cousin as to have a brother.

Moreover, the reasons which actuated Jerome to deny that Jesus had real brethren was - as the Encyclopaedia Biblica (art. James) points out:- "a prepossession in favour of the perpetual virginity of Mary, the mother of Jesus".

It is strange that Smith relies on the Gospels and Epistles to substantiate his thesis when, on his own showing, these writings are regarded as unhistorical and untrustworthy. Smith's postulate is that he, i.e. Jesus of Nazareth, never lived, and so never said anything to anyone. How, then, can he appeal to traits in the picture of Jesus in the New Testament to describe his pre-Christian Jesus? If the Gospels are to such an extent merely

90. Smith, W.B., "The Pre-Christian Jesus", p.45

an allegorical romance, and we must not assume their authors to have believed that Jesus ever lived, how can we possibly rely on them for information about such an obscure matter as a secret and esoteric pre-Christian Nazarene sect? But in defiance of all his postulates, Smith writes as follows: "On the basis, then, of this passage alone (i.e. Mark IV,10-34) we may confidently affirm the primitive secrecy of the Jesus cult".⁹¹

We have attempted in this section of our chapter to describe the theories of Robertson, Smith and to some extent Arthur Drews' agreement with these themes. We could cite more examples of their speculations, but enough ground has been given for some evaluation of this situation. We shall now turn to several appraisals of the theories devised to negate the historical Jesus of the New Testament.

91. Ibid., p. 40

VI. Critical Evaluation:

The most unusual assumption in the writings of the men we have surveyed in this chapter concerns what they have called "the humanized God". The received notion in Christendom has been reversed by these writers. I refer here to the human picture of Jesus in Mark's account and the process of deification in John's Gospel. In Robertson, Smith and Drews, the Saviour-God is gradually humanized in the Gospel record and there is, according to these men, a humanizing process going on in the Gospel tradition. The common starting-point of all three writers, Drews, Smith and Robertson, is that the earliest Gospel narratives do not describe any human character at all; on the contrary, the individuality in question is distinctly divine and not human, in the earliest portrayal. As time goes on it is true that certain human elements do creep in, particularly in Luke and John... In Mark there is

really no man at all; the Jesus is God, or at least essentially divine throughout. He wears only a transparent garment of flesh. Mark⁹² historizes only".

It may be said that this initial premise was basic to their theory of a pre-Christian Jesus God who was never human. This point enables the authors in question to pass from any consideration of the historical details in the New Testament record to their fanciful myth speculations.

The second source of concern to us in these writers involves their disinclination to sift sources and test documents. This negligence prompts them to take en bloc sources and documents which arose separately and in succession. As an example, we may elaborate on their insistence that the belief in the Virgin Birth of Jesus was part and parcel of the earliest tradition. This doctrine cannot be borne out by a careful reference to the

92. Smith, *Ecce Deus*, p. 78

evidence in the New Testament, for the earliest Gospel (Mark) does not have the idea, nor does other sections in the New Testament. Only Matthew and Luke begin their account of Jesus' ministry with this idea.

But the insistence on the Virgin Birth is integral to their theses; for it is assumed that the worship of the one God under the name, aspect or person of the Jesus, the Saviour, was the primitive and indefectible essence of the primitive teaching and propaganda. Jesus, according to these writers, was from the first worshipped as a slain God.

Relative to the mixing up of different phases of the Christian religion, is their lack of concern for the so-called "synoptic problem". Suffice it to say that in the three Gospels, Mark, Matthew and Luke, and in the fourth Gospel and Pauline Epistles there are different

pictures of Jesus the Christ presented. At one time, many theologians believed they could trace the gradual deification of Jesus from the earlier sources to the later formulations, but modern biblical criticism is despairing of this easy, off-hand treatment of the New Testament pictures. Instead of this scheme, e.g. at one point human and another point divine, we are being led to realize that from the earliest reference to Jesus in the first chapters in Acts, there was no point when Jesus was merely a man. The difference in these non-biographical, post-resurrection documents, or the difference between the Synoptic Gospels and the other literature of the New Testament - including the Fourth Gospel - is that the former give the picture on which the assertion that Jesus is the Christ is based, while the latter give the elaboration of this assertion and its implications for Christian thought and life.

This distinction is not exclusive, for it is a difference in emphasis, not in substance. According to Paul Tillich, "The New Testament witness is unanimous in its witness to Jesus as the Christ. This witness is the foundation of the Christian Church"⁹³.

In the third place, these writers abuse the comparative method. When applied discreetly and rationally, this method helps us to trace myths and beliefs back to their homes and earlier forms. But when applied haphazardly, e.g. taking the most superficial resemblance of sound as a reason for connecting words in different languages, the comparative method loses its significance. These writers never concern themselves with the context from which various words and ideas are lifted and furthermore, they never ascertain whether the stories they connect bear any real resemblance to one

93. Tillich, Systematic Theology, 11, page 117-118

another. For example, what have the Zodiacal signs and the Apostles of Jesus in common except the number twelve? The scene of the Gospel is laid in Judea, where from remote antiquity the Jews had classed themselves in twelve tribes. Is it not more likely that this suggested the twelve missionaries sent out by Jesus to announce the coming Kingdom than the twelve signs of the Zodiac? Even if the story of the twelve be legendary, need we go outside Judaism for our explanation of its origin? Many other resemblances cited by these authors founder on the basis of their inadequate use of the comparative method.

Fourthly, the tendency of all these authors to condemn as an interpolation any text which contradicts their hypotheses. The documents are not examined for their veracity but ideas are lifted which agree with their thought and others rejected as interpolations if they fail

to connect with their central themes.

Lastly, the genesis of Christianity as these authors present it, is much more mysterious and obscure than before. Their explanation needs explaining. What was the motive and end in view of the adherents of the pre-Christian Jesus or Joshua in writing the Gospels and bringing down their God to earth, so humanizing in a story their divine myth? The essence, the central idea and active principle of the cult was a protest against idolatry; a crusade for monotheism. But this central theme is difficult to discover in the Gospels, Epistles and other New Testament writings. It is assumed that Jesus' audience were monotheists like himself; for Jesus speaks as a Jew to Jews and perpetually reminds them of their Father in heaven. Moreover, the monotheism of those who stood around the teacher is ever taken for granted by the evangelists,

and in all the precepts of Jesus not one can be adduced that is aimed at the sins of polytheism and idolatry. Jesus' message concerns the immediate **advent** of the Messianic kingdom, and the need of repentance ere it came. Even Paul's letters read as if those for whom he wrote them were already proselytes familiar with the Jewish scriptures.

A brief word in conclusion, for we must examine another myth-theorist. That Jesus never existed is not really the final conclusion of these researches but is instead an unproven assumption. Robertson, Drews and Smith began their investigation, as we outlined Robertson's on another page, with the thought of reconstructing the origin and propagation of Christianity apart from Jesus of Nazareth. To substantiate their negation of the historical figure, they sought parallels in the ancient world to resemble the events in the New Testament.

We cannot pause to refute this school of thought in every detail. We must pass on to another myth-theorist: P. Jensen's "Das Gilgamesch Epos in der Weltliteratur" (1906) will be the subject of our next chapter. We shall describe how Jensen sought to negate the Jesus of history on archaeological grounds, by comparing the stories narrated in the Gospels with those told of Gilgamesch. This is yet another use of the comparative method to predicate the non-existence of Jesus.

CHAPTER VI.

"JESUS AND THE ANCIENT BABYLONIAN GILGAMESCH LEGEND"P. JENSEN'S CONSTRUCTION OF THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY.

Dr. P. Jensen, in his "Das Gilgamesch Epos in der Weltliterature", sees in the Jesus story a duplicate of the ancient Babylonian Gilgamesch legend. In the points of contact which he unearths between the stories told of Gilgamesch and those told of Jesus, Jensen is convinced that the Jesus of the Gospels is a fresh reflex of Gilgamesch, and that the events surrounding his life were directly copied from the Gilgamesch legend. The Babylonian epic is the sole source for the Jesus legend.

It is commonly acknowledged, even by the orthodox interpreters of the Old Testament, that the Hebrews borrowed their myths of creation and of the origin and early history of man from the more ancient civilisations of Babylon. The undoubted occurrence of Babylonian myths in the book of Genesis has provided some less critical and cautious scholars with a clue, as they imagine, to the entire context of the Bible from beginning to end. It is as if the Jews, all through their literary history of a thousand

years, could not possibly have invented any myths of their own, still less have picked a few up elsewhere than in Babylon. Accordingly, in a volume of 1,030 enormous pages, P. Jensen has undertaken to show that the New Testament, no less than the Old, was derived from this single well-spring. Moses and Aaron, Joshua, Jeroboam, Rehoboam, Hadad, Jacob and Esau, Saul, David, Leban, Zipporah, Miriam - sister of Moses - Dinah, Simeon and Levi, Jethro and the Gibeonites and Sichemites, Sarah and Hagar, Abraham and Isaac, Samson, Uriah and Nathan, Naboth, Elijah and Elisha, Naaman, Benhadad and Hazael, Gideon, Abimelech, Jephthah, Tobit, Jehu, and almost any other personage in the Old Testament, are duplicates, according to him, of Gilgamesch or his companion the shepherd Eabani (son of Ea), or of the Hierodule or sacred prostitute, and of a few more leading figures in the Babylonian epic. There is hardly a story in the whole of Jewish literature which is not, according to Jensen, an echo of the Gilgamesch legend; and every personage, every incident, is freely manipulated to make them fit this Procrustean bed. No combinations of elements separated in

the biblical texts, no separation of elements united therein, no recasting of the fabric of a narrative, no modifications of any kind, are so violent as to deter Dr. Jensen. At the top of every page is an abstract of its argument, usually of this type: "Der Hirte Eabani, die Hierodule und Gilgamesch. Der Hirte Moses, sein Weib und Aaron." In other words, as Moses was one shepherd and Eabani another, Moses is no other than Eabani. As there is a sacred prostitute in the Gilgamesch story, and a wife in the legend of Moses, therefore wife and prostitute are one and the same. As Gilgamesch was companion of Eabani, and Aaron of Moses, therefore Aaron was an alias of Gilgamesch. Dr. Jensen is quite content with points of contact between the stories so few and slight as the above, and pursues this sort of loose argument over a thousand pages. Here is another such rubric: "Simson-Gilgamesch's Leiche und Saul-Gilgamesch's Gebeine wieder ausgebraben, Elisa-Gilgamesch's Grab geoffnet." In other words, Simson, or Samson, left a corpse behind him (who does not?): Saul's bones were piously looked after by the Jabeshites; Elisha's bones raised a dead Moabite by mere contact to fresh life. These three figures are, therefore,

ultimately one, and that one is Gilgamesch; and their three stories, which have no discernible features in common, are so many disguises of the Gilgamesch epos.

But Dr. Jensen transcends himself in the New Testament. "The Jesus-saga," he informs us, "as it meets us in the Synoptic Gospels, and equally as it meets us in John's Gospel, stands out among all the other Gilgamesch Sagas which we have so far (i.e. in the Old Testament) expounded, in that it not merely follows up the main body of the Saga with sundry fragments of it, like so many stragglers, but sets before us a long series of bits of it arranged in the original order almost undisturbed."¹ His words in German read: "Die Jesus-sage nach den Synoptikern - wie auch die nach Johannes - unterscheidet sich nun aber von allen anderen bisher erorterten Gilgamesch-sagen dadurch, dass sie hinter dem Gros der Sage nicht nur einzelne Bruchstucke von ihr als Nachzugler bringt, sondern eine lange Reihe von Stucken der Sage in fast ungestorter ursprunglicher Reihenfolge," etc.

Jensen's assumption gives him cause to speak

1. Jensen, page 933.

about the delusions and ignorance of Christians, who, for two thousand years, have been erecting churches and cathedrals in honour of a Jesus of Nazareth, who all the time was a mere alias of Gilgamesch.

Suppose we test some of the arguments by which this remarkable conclusion is reached. Let us begin with John the Baptist (page 811). John was a prophet who appeared east of the Jordan. So was Elias or Elijah. Elijah was a hairy man and John wore a raiment of camel's hair; both of them wore leather girdles.

Now, in the Gilgamesch story, Eabani is covered with hair all over his body (page 579 - "am ganzen Leibe mit Haaren bedeckt ist"). Eabani (page 818) is a hairy man, and presumably was clad in skins ("ist ein haariger Mann und vermutlich mit Fellen bekleidet"). Dr. Jensen concludes from this that John and Elijah are, both of them, equally and independently, duplicates or understudies of Eabani. It never occurs to him that, in the desert, camel's hair was a handy material out of which to make a coat - as, also, leather to make girdles of - and that desert prophets in any story whatever would inevitably be represented as clad in such a manner. He had, indeed, heard of Jo. Weiss's

suggestion that Luke has read the LXX, and modelled his picture of John the Baptist on Elijah; but he rejects the suggestion because he feels - and rightly - that to make any such admissions must compromise his main theory, which is that the old Babylonian epic was the only source for the Evangelists. No (he writes), John's girdle, like Elijah's, came straight out of the Saga ("wohl durch die Sage bedingt ist"). Nor (he adds), can Luke's story of Sarah and Zechariah be modelled on the Old Testament examples, as critics have argued. On the contrary, it is a fresh reflex of Gilgamesch ("ein neues Seiteustuck"), and is copied direct. We must not give in to the suggestion thrown out by modern critics that it is a later addition to the original evangelical tradition. Far from that being so, it must be regarded as an integral and original constituent in the Jesus-saga ("So wird man zugestehen müssen, dass sie keine Zugabe, sondern ein intergrierender Urbestandteil der Jesus - sage ist").

From this and many similar passages, we realise that the view that Jesus never lived, but was a mere reflex of Gilgamesch, is not, in Jensen's mind, a conclusion to be proved, but a dogma assumed as the basis of all

argument, a dogma to which we must adjust all our methods of inquiry. To admit any other sources of the Gospel story, let alone historical facts, would be to infringe the exclusive priority, as a source, of the Babylonian epic; and that is why we are not allowed to argue up to the latter, but only down from it. If, for a moment, he is ready to admit that Old Testament narrative coloured Luke's birth story, and that, for example, the angel's visit in the first chapter of Luke was suggested by the thirteenth chapter of Judges, he speedily takes back the admission. Such an assumption is not necessary ("allein notig ist ein solche Annahme nicht"). "So much," he writes (page 818), "of John's person alone." Let us now pursue the Jesus further.

In the Gilgamesch Epic, it is related how the Hunter marched out to Eabani with the holy prostitute, how Eabani enjoyed her, and afterwards proceeded with her to Erech, where, directly, or in his honour, a festival was held; how he there attached himself to Gilgamesch, and how kingly honours were by the latter awarded to him. We must by now, in a general way, assume on the part of our readers, a knowledge of how

in den Sagen des alten Testaments erlöst haben, darf jetzt in der Hauptsache als bekannt vorausgesetzt werden. In zahlreichen

these events meet us over again in the Sagas of the Old Testament. In the numerous Gilgamesch Sagas, then (of the Old Testament), we found again this re-encounter with the holy prostitute. And yet we seek it in vain in the three first Gospels in the exact context where we should find it on the supposition that they must embody a Gilgamesch Saga - that is to say, immediately subsequent to John's emergence in the desert. Equally little do we find in this context any reflex of Eabani's entry into the city of Erech, all agog at the moment with a festival. On the other hand, we definitely find, in its original position, an echo of Gilgamesch's meeting with Eabani."².

This passage in German reads accordingly:

"So weit von Johannis Person Allein.

Verfolgen wire num die Jesus-Sage weiter.

Im Gilgamesch Epos wird erzählt, wie zu Eabani in der Wüste der Jäger mit der Hierodule hinauszieht, wie Eabani ihrer habe geniesst, und dann mit ihr nach Erech kommt, wo grade oder ihm zu Ehre ein Fest gefeiert wird, wie er sich dort an Gilgamesch anschliesst und ihn durch Diesen Konigliche Ehren zuteil werden. Welche Metamorphosen diese Geschehnisse in den Sagen des alten Testaments erlebt haben, darf jetzt in der Hauptsache als bekannt vorausgesetzt werden. In zahlreichen

2. Jensen, p.818

Gilgamesch Sagen fanden wir nun die Begegnung mit der Hierodule wider. Aber vergeblich suchen wir sie dort in den drei ersten Evangelien, wo ihr Platz wäre, falls diese etwa eine Gilgamesch-Sage enthalten sollten, nämlich unmittelbar hinter Johannis Auftreten in der Wüste. Ebenso wenig finden wir an dieser Stelle etwa einen Reflex von Eabani's Einzug in das festlich erregte Erech. Wohl dagegen treffen wir an ursprünglicher Stelle ein Wiederhall von Gilgamesch's Begegnung mit Eabani." ²

Let us pause a moment and take stock of the above. In the epic, two heroes meet each other in a desert. John and Jesus also meet in a desert; therefore, so argues Jensen, John and Jesus are reproductions of the heroes in question, and neither of them ever lived. It matters nothing that neither John nor Jesus was a Nimrod. This encounter of Gilgamesch and Eabani was, as Jensen reminds us, the model of every Old Testament story in which two males happen to meet in a desert; therefore it must have been the model of the evangelists also when they concocted their story of John and Jesus meeting in the wilderness. But how about the prostitute; and how about the entry into Erech? How are these lacunae of the Gospel story to be filled in? Jensen's

2. Jensen, p.818

solution is remarkable; he finds the encounter with the prostitute to have been the model on which the fourth evangelist contrived his story of Jesus' visit to Martha and Mary. For that evangelist, like the synoptical ones, had the Gilgamesch Saga stored already in his escritoire, and finding that his predecessors had omitted the prostitute he hastened to fill up the lacuna, and doubled her into Martha and Mary. In this and many other respects, so we are assured by Jensen, the fourth evangelist reproduces the Gilgamesch epic more fully and systematically than the other evangelists, and on that account we must assign to John's setting of the life of Christ a certain preference and priority. He is truer to the only source there was for any of it. The other lacuna of the Synoptic Gospels is the feasting in Erech and Eabani's entry amid general feasting into that city. The corresponding episode in the Gospels, we are assured, is the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, which the Fourth Gospel, again hitting the right nail on the head, sets at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, and not at its end. But what, we still ask, is the Gospel counterpart to the honours heaped by Gilgamesch on Eabani? How dull we are! "The

333. John drinks no wine, and is, therefore,

Ibid., p. 320.

baptism of Jesus by John must, apart from other considerations, have arisen out of the fact that Eabani, after his arrival at Gilgamesch's palace, is by him allotted kingly honours." ³ The German reading: "Jesu Taufe durch Johannes ware sonst auch daraus geworden, dass Eabani, nach dem er an Gilgamesch's Hof gelangt ist, durch Diesen Koniglicher Ehren teilhaft wird."

So then Eabani, who, as a hairy man, was John the Baptist, is now, by a turn of Jensen's kaleidoscope, metamorphosed into Jesus, for it is John who did Jesus the honour of baptising him. Conversely, Gilgamesch, who began as Jesus, is now suddenly turned into John. In fact, Jesus-Gilgamesch and John-Eabani have suddenly changed places with one another, in accordance, I suppose, with the rule of interpretation, somewhere laid down by Hugo Winchler, that in astral myths one hero is apt to change with another, not only his stage properties, but his personality. But fresh surprises are in store for Jensen's readers.

Over scores of pages he has argued that John the Baptist is no other than Eabani, because he so faithfully fulfills over again the role of the Eabanis we meet with in the Old Testament. For example, according to Luke (1, 15, and VII, 33), John drinks no wine, and is, therefore,

3. Ibid., p.820.

a Nazirean, who eschews wine and forbears to cut his hair. Therein he resembles Absalom, who, as an Eabani, had at least an upper growth of hair. And as the Eabani of the Epic, with the long head-hair of a woman, drinks water along with the wild beasts in the desert, and as Eabani, in company with these beasts, feeds on grass and herbs alone, so, at any rate according to Luke, John ate no bread.

Imagine the reader's consternation when, after these convincing demonstrations of John's identity with Eabani, and of his consequent non-historicity, he finds him a hundred pages later on altogether eliminated - as from the Gilgamesch Epic, so from the Gospel. For the difficulty suddenly arises before Dr. Jensen's mind that John the Baptist, being mentioned by Josephus, must after all have really lived; but if he lived, then he cannot have been a mere reflex of Eabani. Had he only consulted Dr. Drew's work on the "Witnesses to the Historicity of Jesus" (English translation, page 190), he would have known that "the John of the Gospels" is no other than "The Babylonian Oannes, Joannes, or Hanni, the curiously-shaped creature, half fish and half man, who, according to Berosus, was the first law-giver and inventor

of letters and founder of civilisation, and who rose every morning from the waves of the Red Sea in order to instruct men as to his real spiritual nature." ⁴

Why could not Dr. Jensen consult Dr. Drew 'as to the real spiritual nature' of John the Baptist? Why not consult Robertson, who overwhelms Josephus's inconvenient testimony to the reality of John the Baptist with the customary "suspicion of interpolation." But Jensen appears to lack their resourcefulness, and is able to discover no other way out of his impasse than to suppose that it was originally Lazarus and not John that had a place in his Gilgamesch Epic, and that some ill-natured editor of the Gospels, for reasons he alone can divine, everywhere struck out the name of Lazarus, and inserted in place of it that of John the Baptist, which he found in the works of Josephus. Such are the possibilities of Gospel re-action as Jensen understands them.

One more example of Dr. Jensen's system - in the Gospel, Jesus, finding himself on one occasion surrounded by a larger throng of people than was desirable, took a boat in order to get away from the crowd, and passed across the lake on the shore of which he had been preaching and ministering to the sick.

4. Drews, Arthur, "Witnesses to the Historicity of Jesus", p.190.

The incident is a commonplace enough one, but nothing is too slight and unimportant for Dr. Jensen to detect in it a Gilgamesch parallel, and accordingly he writes thus of it: "As for Xisuthros, so for Jesus, a boat is lying ready, and like Xisuthros and Jonas, Jesus "flees" in a boat." ⁵ The German reading:- "Wie fur Xisuthros, liegt fur Jesus ein Schiff bereit, und, wie Xisuthros und Jonas, 'flieht' Jesus in ein Schiff." Xisuthros is the name of the flood-hero in Berossus. Hardly a single one of the parallels which crowd the thousand pages of Jensen's writing is less flimsy than the above. Without doing more violence to texts and to probabilities, one could prove that Achilles and Patroclus and Helen, Aeneas and Achates and Dido, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza and Dulcinea, were all of them so many understudies of Gilgamesch, Eabani and his temple salve.

How shall we evaluate this - yet another attempt to negate the historical Jesus? Much of what was said about Robertson, Smith and Drews applies to the work of Jensen. In brief, we shall summarise what to us appears to be the weaknesses of Jensen's effort. (1) Dr. Jensen has not troubled himself to acquire any knowledge of modern textual criticism. He has

5. Jensen, p.838

no sense of the differences of idea and style which divide the Fourth from the earlier Gospels, and he lacks all insight into the development of the Gospel tradition. He takes Christian documents out of their historical context and ignores their dependence on the Judasism of the period B.C. 100 to A.D. 100. He has no understanding of the prophetic, Messianic and Apocalyptic aspects of early Christianity, no sense of its intimate relations with the beliefs and opinions which lie before us in the apocryphs like the Book of Enoch, the Fourth Esdras, the Ascent of Isaiah, the Testaments of the Patriarchs. He does not realise that in the four Gospels he has before him successive stages or layers of stratification of Christian tradition, and he accordingly, like Robertson, Smith and Drews, treats them as a single literary block, of which every part is of the same age and evidential value. Like his Gilgamesch Epic, the Gospels, for all he knows about them, might have been dug up only yesterday among the sands of Mesopotamia, instead of being the work of a sect with which, as early as the end of the

first century, we are fairly well acquainted. Never once does Jensen ask himself how the authors of the New Testament came to have the Gilgamesh Epic at the tips of their tongues, exactly in the form in which he translates it from Babylonian tablets incised 2,000 years before Christ. By what channels did it reach them? Why were they at such pains to transform it into the story of a Galilean Messiah crucified by the Roman Governor of Judaea? And, as Paul and Peter, like everyone else named in the book, are duplicates of Gilgamesh and Eabani, where are we to draw the line of intersection between heaven and earth? Where fix the year in which the early Christians ceased to be myths and became mere men and women?

Implicit in these remarks is the misuse of the comparative method by Jensen. The slightest resemblance and similarity of detail is lifted from its context and made to explain an event or person.

Jensen's survey of the origins of Christianity has one thing in common with Bauer, Kautsky, Robertson, Drews and Smith, namely, after reading his account we need some explanation of

his explanation. If there are many passages in the New Testament, such as the Revelation of St. John and the Second Coming passages, which are mysterious and esoteric, the reader has not become fully acquainted with esotericism or abstruse writing until he has pursued the voluminous writings of these men.

We have sought in these chapters, called by us "the Christ-Myth theorists", to describe the account of the origin of the Christian message by men who initially rejected the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth. While we have not proposed to treat these constructions in any chronological manner, nor have we endeavoured to refute their arguments on biblical, textual and theological grounds, we have undertaken this aspect of our general discussion - The development of 'myth' and 'history' from Hegel to Bultmann to relate the movement away from history which began, at least for our thesis, with Hevelian philosophy. Our general theme has been the priority of idea as opposed to the mere fact in the Hegelians and the Christ-myth theorists. In our next section we shall be concerned with the mere fact as opposed to the idea. The reaction to the recoil from history began in

the middle of the 19th century in the search of the historical Jesus. The systematic formulation of the quest for factual data and the anti-metaphysical ideas was given by Albrecht Ritschl and his disciples at the turn of the 19th century.

CHAPTER I.

"THE QUEST OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS"

Between Strauss' first "Life of Jesus" in 1835 and the Hirschelian theological school in the latter part of the century, the so-called liberal Jesus picture was drawn by innumerable theologians, historians and religious novelists. Possibly one way of showing the many-sided contents of this picture is to list a few of the books which were published during that interval and to select from them some general themes and presuppositions.

PART TWO

THE RETURN TO HISTORY.

It is difficult to discern some of the obvious assumptions and perceive some overall impression of the reactions which were made to Hegelianism by these writers. Strauss' "Popular life of Jesus for the German People" in 1864 set the stage for the many efforts at reconstructing the life of Jesus when the legendary and mythical aspects of that picture were eliminated. Such works as: Theodore Zahn's "The Human Development of Jesus" (1861); Hughes', "The Humanity of Christ" (1879); Newman's, "Hebrew Jesus" (1895); Tappan's "The Man Jesus"; Michel's "Jesus, a Man, Not the Son of God, a Challenge

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1. Schweitzer, Albert, "Quest of the Historical Jesus", page 311.

to the false Christianity of the Churches"; Blatchford's "Altruism: Christ's Glorious Gospel of Love against Man's Dismal Science of Greed" (1898); Ghillany's, "Theological Letters to the Cultural Classes of the German People"; and the many books entitled, "The Life of Jesus", and the innumerable works on the Synoptic tradition and the Synoptic Problem . Each, in their separate and often similar ways, depicted the historical Jesus in terms of the problems, social, theological and psychological which were foremost in the era. These "Lives of Jesus", according to Schweitzer, were composed with a rationalistic bias. "The bias leads them (the writers) to project back into history what belongs to their own time, the eager struggle of the modern religious spirit with the spirit of Jesus, and seek, in history, justification and authority for its beginning. The consequence is that it creates the historical Jesus in its own image, so that it is not the modern spirit influenced by the spirit of Jesus, but the Jesus of Nazareth constructed by modern historical theology, that is set to work upon our race."¹ Commenting on the Jesus which was created by the

1. Schweitzer, Albert, "Quest of the Historical Jesus", page 311.

liberals after their own likeness, in their own image, Schweitzer writes: "What is admitted as historic is just what the spirit of the time can take out of the records in order to assimilate to itself and bring out of it a living form."²

One German scholar, Frenssen, betrayed the secret of his perspective when he confidently super-scribes the narrative drawn from the latest critical investigations with the title "The Life of the Saviour portrayed according to German research as the basis for a spiritual re-birth of the German Nation."³ Another commentator on those liberal portraits - one who was led to question and deny the historicity of Jesus - says: "Jesus has been made the receptacle into which every theologian pour his own ideal."⁴

Examples of this sort of reading into history one's own assumptions and being convinced that the figures and events - in this instance those in the New Testament - portray their own concerns and mirror their own ideals, is not a modern device, nor is it necessarily liberal. The conservative interpretation of the Bible has, to use Tillich's terminology, always practiced this "jumping over"⁵ view of history. That is

2. Ibid., p. 307.

3. Ibid., p. 307.

4. Kalthoff, "The Rise of Christianity", p.57.

5. Tillich, Paul, "Advanced lectures in Systematic Theology", p. 205, from stenographic copy compiled by Peter John, 1954.

to say, many interpreters, regardless of their theological persuasions, have sought to see in Jesus the things which mirror their own temperaments, e.g. the meek, mild and gentle Jesus of the Pietists and the superman of Billy Graham. But, the liberals in the 19th century, on the basis of their use of historical science, attempted to get behind the Apostolic, Evangelistic picture to the "factual" Jesus. Once behind the "Christ of dogma", these writers attempted to reconstruct the Jesus of history in some biographical detail.

We cannot hope to elucidate the investigation of the historical Jesus from Strauss to Ritschl and we are not concerned to trace the various portraits of Jesus which emerged, e.g. Ethical Reformer, the Johannine Christ, the Synoptic Jesus, Renan's Romantic Jesus, the Spiritualised Christ of Strauss and Schleiermacher. Our primary interest in these decades broadly covering the years between Strauss' "Popular Life of Jesus for the German People" (1864), and Ritschl's "Justification and Reconciliation" (1870 - 1874, translated into English by H.R. Mackintosh in 1900), and into the first

decades of the twentieth century, is the discernible return to history, at least to one interpretation of the historical. We can describe this interpretation by pointing out some of the guiding predispositions of the writers.

These years, according to Schweitzer who has sketched the "Lives of Jesus" in his classic "The Quest of the Historical Jesus", were a period of historical experiment instead of a period of historical research. In these "'Lives of Jesus'...a series of experiments repeated with constantly varying modifications suggested by the results furnished by the subsidiary sciences."⁶ Tentative hypotheses and arbitrary, sometimes violent conclusions, e.g. Bauer, Kalthoff, Kautsky and others in the early twentieth century, were postulated.

What then are some of the principles upon which these liberal Jesus-pictures were drawn. (1) Schweitzer points out that the historical investigation of the life of Jesus did not take its rise from a purely historical interest. These investigations turned to the Jesus of History as an ally in the struggle against the tyranny of dogma. Christianity must, according to these interpreters, be emancipated from rigid

6. Schweitzer, op.cit., p.9.

forms and petrified expressions before it could be made intelligible in an age when men were no longer influenced by the first century world-view. The liberation from forms, and the consequent efforts to make the message of the New Testament intelligible to the modern mind, constituted the guiding principles during the period. Weinel's book, "Jesus, a man, not the Son of God: A Challenge to the False Christianity of the Churches", has these words in the title page: "The activity of love - not the absurdities of Creed." These studies in the life of Jesus and into his teaching and activities "were eager to picture Him as truly and purely human, to strip him of the robes of splendour with which he had been apparelled, and clothe him once more with the coarse garments in which He had walked in Galilee."⁷ The supernatural halo which had surrounded Jesus must be removed before the human, historical Jesus could be appreciated.

(2) This humanising or historising process, called by one critic of the liberals, "the Humanitarian Christ",⁸ developed their portraits on the lines that a reliable knowledge of the life of Jesus could be discovered in the Gospel

7. Ibid., p. 4-5.

8. Warfield, "The Person and Work of Christ", page, 135.

of St. Mark. This Gospel, considered to be the earliest formulation of the tradition concerning the acts and teachings of Jesus, was designed, according to these interpreters, to set forth a definite view of the course of development of the public ministry of Jesus. The historical critic, it was believed, without imposing psychological connections in the Second Gospel or psychological explanation of motives which guided the Evangelist in his writing, could discover in the simple outline the main divisions in the course of Jesus' ministry. By sifting the events in the text, excluding - on naturalistic grounds and scientific determinations,- the supernatural embellishments, the historical kernel of the life could be recovered. The picture thus drawn on the basis of the Marcan data was regarded as the picture of the unmistakable historical Jesus in distinction from the Christ of the Dogmas. Each critic of the sources in the New Testament retains whatever portion of the traditional sayings which can be fitted into his construction of the facts and his conception of the historical possibility, and rejects the rest.

(3) These liberal reconstructions of the

historical Jesus were influenced by the social ideas of their time. There was, so to speak, a liberal joy in culture and a robust optimism associated with learning and the products of an age aligned with romanticism. In this era there was an emphasis placed on the Christ which appeared not in the extraordinary, but in the common, in the daily life of the family, in the integrity of trade, and in the peace of nations. The increase of justice and truth, of knowledge and love, the diminution of suffering and disease, of ignorance and greed and the living for others, were some of the characteristic patterns of the middle and late nineteenth century. The spirit of the age was discovered in the New Testament Jesus, and each interpreter of Jesus created Him in accordance with his own character. That is to say, the Jesus that was discovered behind the affirmations in the Synoptic Gospels was more of a reflection of the men discovering this Jesus than it was of the figure of Jesus.

(4) Weinel's chapter in his "Jesus in the Nineteenth Century" - entitled "Jesus as Preacher of Reform" - points to another

principle championed by the liberal interpreters of Jesus, namely the ethico-religious emphasis which was discovered in Jesus' preaching. The purpose of Jesus, according to this ethicising of the sources, is to establish a community of which His disciples are to be the foundation, and, by means of this community, to bring about the coming of the Kingdom of God. In the moral organisation of mankind, through action from the motive of love, the Kingdom of God, as this Kingdom was lived and taught by Jesus, became one of the primary emphases in the nineteenth century. The historical Jesus which was rediscovered desired only to be a reformer, the spiritual deliverer of the people of God, to realise upon earth the Kingdom of God which they were all seeking in the beyond, and to extend the reign of God over all nations.

From Jesus' teachings on the Kingdom of God, these nineteenth century interpreters inferred an ethical portrait of Jesus. His personality was to be known through his deeds and actions. Moreover, as we will note in the Ritschlians, the Christology of these liberal Lives of Jesus was characterised by the emphases laid upon

9. Schweitzer, Albert, "Quest of the Historical Jesus" p. 210.
 10. Schweitzer, Op.cit., p. 212.

Jesus' faithfulness under suffering, and by his obedience and fidelity to his ethical vocation. The Deity of Jesus is to be derived from the goodness and value to be discerned in His historic manhood. The primary basic reality is the man Jesus, His relation towards other men, His effect and power upon them, is what is considered to be His Godhead.

(5) Still another guiding principle in these interpreters concerns what Schweitzer has called the a priori "natural" psychology which governed their interpretation of the Jesus which was discovered behind the Apostolic witness or Kerygma.⁹ Bringing to bear on the narratives which did not stipulate motives or connect events (their) psychological tools, these men attempted to give some historical unity to the Marcan account. Schweitzer illustrates what he terms this modern psychologising process by taking many incidents from the New Testament which were used by these "liberal psychologists."¹⁰ We shall attempt to illustrate the general pattern which Schweitzer accuses them of imposing upon the New Testament narratives. These reconstructionists associated an a priori view of the development of Jesus in the Marcan account.

9. Schweitzer, Albert, "Quest of the Historical Jesus"-

10. Schweitzer, Op.cit., p.212.

His ministry was sharply divided between the periods of success and failure. In the earlier part of His ministry, it was believed that He endeavoured in Galilee to found the Kingdom of God in an ideal sense; that he concealed His consciousness of being the Messiah, which was constantly growing more assured, until His followers should have attained by inner enlightenment to a higher view of the Kingdom of God and of the Messiah; that almost at the end of His Galilean ministry He declared Himself to them as the Messiah at Caesarea Philippi; that on the same occasion He at once began to picture to them a suffering Messiah, whose lineaments gradually became more and more distinct in His mind amid the growing opposition which He encountered, until, finally, He communicated to His disciples His decision to put the Messianic cause to the test in the capital, and that they followed Him thither and saw how His fate fulfilled itself. Concerning the periodical flights and retirements of Jesus and His Disciples, another "liberal" psychologist, Keim, decides for Mark why Jesus fled on these occasions. While the Evangelists

are silent on the motive for these retirements and leave us to suppose that Jesus made His journeys to Caesarea Philippi and the neighbourhood of Tyre and Sidon in the middle of winter from mere pleasure in travel, or for the extension of the Gospel, and that He made His last journey to Jerusalem without any external necessity, Keim and others seek to fill in the picture for us. Keim writes: "Jesus fled because He desired to preserve Himself for God and man, to secure the continuance of His ministry to Israel, to defeat as long as possible the dark designs of His enemies, to carry His cause to Jerusalem, and there, while acting - as it was His duty to do - with prudence and foresight in his relations with men, to recognise clearly, by the Divine silence or the Divine action, what the Divine purpose really was which could not be recognised in a moment. He acts like a man who knows the duty both of examination and action, who knows His own worth and what is due to Him and His obligations towards God and man."¹¹ Schweitzer says that "the net result, from the historical point of view, of the study of the life of Jesus

11. Ibid., p.212.

in the Post-Straussian period...is the recognition that the natural psychology is not here the historical psychology, but that the latter must be deduced from certain historical data."¹².

But Schweitzer, who we shall not be concerned with, has his own a priori scheme. He believes that, before the advent of eschatology, critical theology was, in the last resort, without a principle of discrimination, since it possessed no reagent capable of infallibly separating out modern ideas on the one hand, and genuinely ancient New Testament ideas on the other. Amos Wilder, among others, has offered a profound critique of Schweitzer's scheme in his excellently written "Ethics and Eschatology in the New Testament".

We may conclude our introductory chapter by pointing again to the central purpose of these writers. Summarily speaking, they attempted to disengage that which is abiding and eternal in the life and personality of Jesus from the non-essentials. Weary of speculation and distrustful of traditional ways of expressing the significance of Jesus, these men were intent on unearthing the "real" and the "genuine"

12. Ibid., p.221.

13. *Belshazzar's Feast*, p.3.

stratum in the New Testament. With the tools of historical and psychological science and the enlightened, optimistic world view of the nineteenth century, these men believed that the Christian faith could defend itself in the "courts of Caesar" if the original, initial historical "facts" of the faith were made plain. The facts behind the records, behind the symbols of his reception as the Christ, were diligently sought. On the basis of these empirical facts, the "Life of Jesus" was sketched.

While the history of these attempts to write a "Life of Jesus", has been elaborated and criticised by Albert Schweitzer in his early work, "The Quest of the Historical Jesus", these efforts, while not producing the desired result, did prepare the way for modern theology. According to one interpreter of the modern theological scene, "The present situation in Christology is one which could not have emerged before the 'Jesus of history' movement, but only after it."¹³. D.M. Baillie proceeds to elaborate the essential gain of "the rediscovery of the Jesus of history" movement. While contemporary theologians may "wish to repudiate as hopelessly

13. Baillie, D.M. "God Was in Christ", p.9.

inadequate the account of Jesus given by the 'liberal Protestants' or the 'modernists' of a generation ago, and may even complain that these missed the truth by reason of their prejudice against admitting the 'supernatural'.... now the belief in the full humanity of Christ has come into its own, and, if this new realisation was part of 'the rediscovery of the Jesus of history', it has not passed away with the passing of that particular movement, but lives on in the work of those 'catholic' and 'dialectical' schools to which the theology of that movement is most uncongenial."¹⁴ Baillie illustrates the ways in which the full humanity of Jesus has left behind the cruder forms of docetism and monophysitism. While contemporary theologians may quarrel with the 'liberal' view of history, and their Christological biases, they can no longer minimise the humanity of Jesus who was confessed to be the Christ.

In the next four chapters, we shall be concerned to sketch the theological formulation of the "quest of the historical Jesus" in the Ritschlians. The so-called Ritschlian system of thinking was centered in the teaching of Albrecht Ritschl,

14. Ibid., p.11-12.

who was born at Breslau on March 21, 1822 and died as Professor of Theology at Gottingen on March 28, 1880. It was not until 1870-1875 that his important work on Justification and Reconciliation (Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung), was published, and it was not long after that his reputation as an able and independent thinker was established. He speedily gathered around himself a group of attached disciples who became known as the school of Ritschl, even although they did not follow their "master" all the way. Of the theologians who may be classed as the "School of Titschl", the following is a list of the outstanding ones:

1. W. Herrmann in Marburg.

Works.

(1) Die Religion im Verhältniss zum Welterkennen und zur Sittlichkeit, 1879.

(2) Der Verkehr des Christen mit Gott, 2nd edition 1892 (1st edition 1886, English Translation of 2nd Edition 1895).

2. Julius Kaftan in Berlin.

Works.

(1) Das Wesen der Christ, Religion, 1881 (2nd edition 1888).

- (2) Die Wahrheit d. Christ. Religion, 1889
(English Translation 2 Vols. 1894).

3. A. Harnack in Berlin.
Works.

- (1) Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, 2nd Edition
1888-1890. (1st. Edition 1887-1889;
English Translation of 3rd Edition 1897).
(2) Grundriss d. Dogmengeschichte, 2 vols.,
1889-1891. English Translation 1893.

4. H. Schultz in Gottingen.
Works.

- (1) Die Lehre von der Gottheit Christi, 1881.
(2) Alttestamentliche Theologie, 3rd Edition
1889; English Translation, 2 Vols., 1892.

5. J. Weiss (Ritschl's son-in-law) in Marburg.
Works.

- (1) Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes, 1892.
(2) Die Nachfolge Christi und die Predigt der
Gegenwart, 1895.

We note from the titles of the above works their concern for the Kingdom of God, one of the primary Ritschlian emphases. Other names to be included in the list would be Lobstein, in Strassburg; Haring and Gottschick, in Tubingen; Troeltsch, in Heidelberg; Sell, in Bonn; A.C. McGiffert in

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New York. In order to show how varied the departments of interest of these men are, it will be interesting to notice: Harnack and McGiffert with Church History and History of Doctrine; Schultz with Old Testament Theology, Wendt with New Testament Theology; Troeltsch with Christian and Social Ethich; etc.

Obviously, we cannot investigate each Ritschlian theologian in the limits set in our essay. Many interpreters of Ritschlian Theology, e.g. James Orr, Alfred Garvie, Albert Swing, John Mozley, Leonhard Stahlin, Ernest Edghill, have performed this task for us. We shall be concerned with four Ritschlians: Albrecht Ritschl, Wilhelm Herrmann, Ernst Troeltsch and Otto Pfleiderer. The last two thinkers, while reacting against many of the Ritschlian emphases, may be said to form a bridge between the 19th and 20th centuries. Our primary theme, beyond discussing the "theory of Knowledge" which Ritschl elaborated, is the interpretation of history in the Ritschlian school. Their interpretation of history will unfold in our discussion, and in our evaluations of each theologian we will attempt to focus the points which bear upon their view of history and the historical Jesus.

CHAPTER II.

THE THEOLOGY OF ALBRECHT RITSCHL.

1. Introduction.

While the post-Hegelians, left and right, were interpreting Christianity along the dialectical lines set by their master, leading eventually to a negation of the historical Jesus and a dehistorisation of the narratives, there were others during the century, as we have intimated in our last chapter, who were concentrating on the teachings of Jesus, in particular the ethical aspects of His message, including a decided predelection for the synoptic portraits in contrast to the theological, speculative pictures in the Fourth Gospel, the letters of Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews. While these ethical portraits and innumerable "Lives of Jesus" were inventive and imaginative in their efforts to recapture the personality of Jesus and the initial facts of the Christian Gospel, it was not until the latter half of the century in the Ritschlian school that the historical approach inaugurated in these diffuse writings received some systematic treatment. Because the Ritschlians, commonly called for their generic methods and aims in

theology, considered the historical revelation in Jesus of Nazareth to be the central datum of theology, it is to their positions which we turn for the culmination of the thinking of the period.

The school of Ritschl, or the theological and epistemological methods associated with Albrecht Ritschl, Hermann, Kaftan and Harnack, was a reactionary, corrective theological movement. Their views, especially the thought of the theologian whose name has been given to the school, were always stated in opposition to the positions elaborated by their predecessors and contemporaries. As with every type of corrective theology, even those in our own day, e.g. Barth and R. Niebuhr, the ideas enunciated were born in the heat of controversy. Inconsistency, continual vacillation and restatement will characterise the men under discussion. John Mozley, an interpretor of Ritschl's theology, makes this point in his book, "Ritschlianism, an Essay" - "What often makes Ritschl's theology so difficult is that it is constructed in opposition to rival views and is continually determined by polemical motives. Hence arises contradictions sometimes of a glaring nature, and his positive thought is hard to grasp."¹.

1. Mozley, John, "Ritschlianism, an Essay" - p.42.

Moreover, along with these correctives, it must be remembered that the theological ideas under observation "broke fresh ground", as it were. Faced with the challenge of scientism and speculative idealism, these men sought a resuscitation of the faith which would prove adequate to these danger. While exercising restraint and fairness in our explications of the "Ritschlian" motifs, our primary concern will be to discover their interpretation of history. But, as Ritschl does not develop this interpretation to any appreciable degree in his writings, it will be necessary for us to search out his interpretation. We have chosen to facilitate our primary enquiry by developing Ritschl's methodological approach to the Christian message, including his theory of cognition and value judgments. After we have set the stage for Ritschl's theological system, we shall consider his treatment of the Person and Life-Work of Jesus the Christ. His approach to history will, at certain points, be observed, and the last section of our essay will be devoted to drawing together his conception of history.

We have said the Ritschlian school was a

theological school of the school. The religious

2. *Methodology, S.S. "Types of Theology" - p.139.*

corrective position. What sort of corrective was thought necessary, and upon what lines did the restatement take? Essentially, the men connected with this school sought to offset the intellectualism of the Hegelians - to break the yoke which hitherto bound philosophy and theology together. If theology was to do its proper work, it must be freed from the chains which its union with philosophy had cast around it, and to bid it go forth free and independent. The philosophical subtleties and alien principles introduced into theological writing constituted the greatest stumbling block. Describing their common aim, H.R. Macintosh remarks: "Back to the New Testament by way of the reformation - this is the motto that guides him (Ritschl) steadily."² These men desired a Gospel, a Jesus freed from idealism, Hellenic philosophical categories and metaphysical abstractions. The traditional "two nature theory", vague mystical absorptions and ecclesiastical terminology had stifled the Christ. A ground of certainty in religion which should be independent of , and unassailable by, all critical theories and metaphysical speculations constituted the principle drive of the school. "The religious

2. Macintosh, H.R. "Types of Theology" - p.139.

instinct," according to one interpretor of Ritschlianism, "refusing to be stilled, yearned for a satisfaction in a region where reason could not intrude with its questionings, nor science enter with its doubts."³ Natural science and empirical methods were driving out belief in the supernatural. The philosophical solutions were varied and essentially inadequate to the strains which had been placed on faith through the antagonism between supernaturalism and rationalism, between faith and science. The type of certainty which the Ritschlians made it their task to offer would make the Christian independent of these extraneous difficulties. The certainty of faith springs immediately out of experience of the revelation of God in Christ. Herrmann, probably the finest theologian of the group, writes of the immediate impression of Christ on the soul in the following manner:

"Our certainty of God is rooted in the simple fact that in Jesus we meet with a man who must hold His own against the world. For he who experiences such a compulsion through the image of Jesus that he is obliged to concede to Him this dignity, receives with this at the same

3. Orr, James, "Ritschlianism, Expository and Critical Essays" - p.7.

time the thought of a Power over all things, which is not otherwise actuated than through the disposition from which the life-work of Jesus has proceeded. God gives Himself to us to be recognised as this Power which is with Jesus. But then we are compelled to say that the existence of Jesus in our world is that fact through which God so touches us that He opens up intercourse with us."⁴.

Faith in the God revealed in the Son being immediate is also free from historical criticism, viz. establishment of the genuineness and historicity of the records before faith in Christ was possible. This freedom is articulated in Herrmann's greatest book, "Communion of the Christian with God". He writes: "The doubt whether the image of Jesus which works on us in the Gospel belongs to legend and not to history is forthwith excluded. The evidence of the historical reality of Jesus always rests for the believer upon the significance which the knowledge of Jesus has won from him. Only after this has been taken to heart as an indubitable fact of his life does that which testifies for the historical reality of Jesus stand out clear and visible

4. Herrmann, Wilhelm, "The Communion of the Christian with God" -p51.

before him...A judgment resting on grounds of historical investigation could only claim probability. But to Christian faith it is certain that Jesus has lived as the man who, with His message of a Kingdom of God, has opened to men the possibility of an eternal life, and who, at the same time, was conscious that the existence of His Person in its life and death will realise this Kingdom of God for all who do not pass Him by."⁵.

This immediate encounter with Christ, free from historical criticism, even from mystical speculations, will be the centre of our survey of Ritschlian theology in a later context. The factuality of the revelation in Christ forms the supposed groundwork of the Ritschlian approach and, yet, the authenticity of these "facts" or their understanding of the "evangelical facts" does not seem to impair their approach. But, before this paradox can be considered, we must pass to another certainty in religious things - a certainty which Ritschl would have us believe is a prerequisite for understanding even the revelation in Christ. This assurance is derived from his methodology: a method of approach to religious truth which is concerned with how we

5. Ibid., p. 72.

know what we know. The epistemological canon of the school, adopted from Kant and Lotze, says that we know things exclusively as they are for us in their effects, not as they are in themselves. On the basis of the predicates, the effects and signs, we speak of the subject which lies behind the phenomena. Theoretical knowledge of the numenon, viz. God-in-Himself, via idealistic speculations or scholastic proofs for his existence, are unwarranted.

While this is one way of describing the "Ritschlian method", other factors may also be included. The method may be described as a separation of theology from philosophy. In a more positive vein, the acceptance of the principle that the revelational value of Christ is the ground of knowledge for all problems of theology. Everything in theology is derived from the pure source of revelation in the person of the historical Christ. In the apprehension of the revelational value, or worthship, of Christ, the theologian must reckon himself a member of the Christian community. There are numerous ways of stating the method. "The highest principle of the Ritschlian theology," according to one of its expert interpreters, "is to take all in one view,

the sole revelation-value of Christ, in contrast with all commingling of Christian faith with philosophy or nature-knowledge, and under the condition that the theologian has his standing within the Christian community as one who shares its faith and experience."⁶ Yet, another interpreter of the "Ritschlian method" augments Dr. Orr's description. Swing writes: "Ritschl stands then in this school not for definite views, critical or doctrinal, but for a certain starting point and method...The danger of subjectivism belonging to Schleiermacher's method had shown itself in conservative, liberal and mediating theologies alike, both in the direction of speculation and in that of mysticism. Ritschl, in the view of his school, has his main significance in the fact that he broke with this method, that he started not from the 'pious consciousness' but from an objective fact, the Gospel, or, more definitely, the historical person of Christ Jesus, as the one thing supernatural, the only and sufficient revelation of God."⁷

But, whatever may be the numerous understandings of the method and its ability to handle theological doctrine, one must allow the theologian himself to describe what he believes to be his own

6. Orr, James, "The Ritschlian Theology" - p.49.

7. Swing, Albert, "The Theology of Albrecht Ritschl" - p.55. Swing quotes from Porter in the "Andover Review" 1893 - p.445.

distinctive approach. In the introduction to his third volume "Justification and reconciliation", Ritschl says: "The formally correct expression of theological propositions depends on the method we follow in defining the object of cognition, that is, on the theory of knowledge which we consciously or unconsciously obey."⁸ It appears that Ritschl considers his theory of knowledge to be the crux of his method. We shall have opportunity to discuss his theory of knowledge and those theories which he opposes in another context; meanwhile, another epistemological canon - another certainty - should receive summary treatment. This second canon involves the separation of theoretic and religious knowledge. The latter knowledge depends primarily on practical judgments, and the truth or falsehood of which is to be tested by practical standards alone. In religion we have to do only with "judgments of value" (Werthurtheile), that is, not with the objective or scientific aspects of truth, but solely with their relation to our practical ends - the ends in this case being those of religion, namely the attainment by the help of superior powers of freedom from the hindrances or limitations of the natural life. Because these certainties are to be attained in and through Christ's revelation of

8. Ritschl, "Justification and reconciliation" - p.15.

forgiveness, and in the extension of this Power in the Community, the Kingdom of God, Christianity is certified as true, independently of any other evidence. Again, this canon, or a fuller understanding of it, will occupy us at a later stage in our essay.

Before his theory of knowledge and value-judgment can be discussed, a summary of the generic features of the school may be noted. Through these points we may ascertain the lines which the corrective theologies were to pursue.

(1) The exclusion of metaphysics from theology, drawing a distinction between religious and theoretic knowledge. The question really concerns not the total exclusion of metaphysics - that Ritschl and his school never actually do - but "What" metaphysic is to be valid appears to be their question.

(2) The rejection of a type of metaphysic leads the school to question speculative theism, viz. any sort of knowledge of the numenon or the "thing-in-itself" or a knowledge of God-for-Himself.

(3) The condemnation of ecclesiastical dogma as an illegitimate mixture of theology and metaphysics.

(4) The antagonism shown to religious mysticism as a metaphysical type of piety.

(5) The practical conception of Christianity and religion.

(6) The

consequent contrast between the subject and its predicates with the dictum that we can know only the subject through its attributes and manifold relationships. This phenomenalism dictates their treatment of the Christ. Furthermore, this approach elevates Christ's work and vocation to a primary place. Moreover, the emphasis on the predicates excludes from theology everything which lies outside the earthly manifestation of the Christ, including speculation on the pre-existence as the Eternal Son, the origin of the personality of Christ, the inter-relationships of the Trinity and any eschatological ideas. (7) The emphasis laid on the historical revelation of God in Christ as opposed to any natural revelation, or even - at least to some extent - the history of revelation which preceded the advent of Christ. (8) The use of the category of "Kingship" of Christ and the Kingdom of God as the regulative principle of Christian dogmatics. (9) The tendency to limit theological investigation to the contents of religious consciousness, though this is more evident in Herrmann and Troeltch.

2. The Ritschlian Method.

Because the theological ideas of the school depend on the theological method used by the men -

to the extent that the method of treating the content of the Christian message is conditioned by the methodological assumptions - we should endeavour to make clear what this method entails. But, a difficult task awaits us - a task which Ritschl on more than one occasion failed to carry through. Rather than dwell on the details of the method, Ritschl always showed a certain impatience with "so-called questions of principle," being eager to pass on to what he considered the actual business of dogmatics. "Our exposition of Ritschl's principle and method," according to John Baillie, "is rendered more difficult by the fact that he himself was more interested in using them than in describing them...His meagre occasional statements concerning these questions (which include, however, one polemical pamphlet on Theology and Metaphysics), seem clearly to bear upon them the marks of this impatience. They appear to be insufficiently thought out; they betray a real uncertainty of mind, having been constantly subjected to serious revision in a second or third edition of the books containing them; and they champion difficult, if not indeed quite indefensible, positions without much apparent awareness of the objections that may be taken to them."⁹.

9. Baillie, John, "The Interpretation of Religion" -
p. 283.

Ritschl remarks on this difficulty in a letter written during the composition of his magnum opus. "I have once again been struck by the unsatisfying nature of all these so-called questions of principle...The art of theological interpretation has indeed fallen quite out of practice, and I am doubtful if I can myself practice it sufficiently well to escape making a fool of myself; but all these prolegomena still make me think of such processes as the mixing of colours, the stretching of the canvas, the drawing aside of the curtain, the placing of the model, the washing of the hands, and to waste time over these things is not very attractive to me."¹⁰.

After these warnings against expecting too much clarity from Ritschl, we may follow his reasoning in his introduction to the third volume of his primary work. It has been said that Ritschl sets his approach against that of his contemporaries and the traditional theological procedures. He describes the traditional schemes as proceeding outside the Christian community. Their threefold method has to do with postulating man's original perfection, elaborating the universality of inherited sin and deriving from this state man's need for redemption. "Then follows, at the third

10. Ibid., p.284, Quoted from "Albrecht Ritschl
Leben" - Vol.II. p.106.

stage of the traditional theological system, the knowledge of Christ's person and work, and its application to the individual and the fellowship of believers. Not until it has to deal with this topic does theology take up the standpoint of the community of believers, but it does so in such a way that the..rational conception of redemption is held to throughout the exposition of its actual course."¹¹. Criticising this scheme, the theology moulded on Melancthon's Loci, Ritschl remarks: "No system can result from a method which thus traverses three separate points of view in accomplishing the different parts of its task. A method which is so predominantly inspired by purely rational ideas of God and sin and redemption is not the positive theology which we need, and which can be defended against the objections of general rationalism."¹². What then is the positive theology Ritschl proposes? What is the "rounded exposition of theology," represented as a "single surface" which Ritschl employs? He believes that an understanding of forgiveness, justification and reconciliation which are assured through Christ can be comprehended only so far as we consciously and intentionally reckon ourselves members of the community which

11. Ritschl, "Justification and Reconciliation" -
p. 5.

12. Ibid., p.5.

Christ has founded. Only if theology takes up this point is there any hope of constructing a theological system which deserves the name. We can know God only if we know him through Christ - and it follows, we can know Him only if we belong to the community of believers. "Not only, however, are God and all the operations of His grace to be constructed through the revelation in Christ, but even sin can be appreciated only in virtue of the forgiveness of sins which is Christ's special gift."¹³ Christian theology, moreover, should possess the marks of the regenerate life. This sort of theology, emanating from the Holy Spirit and the experience of forgiveness, can be written from the standpoint of the community of believers and not, according to Ritschl, if it is built on the substructure of pretended Natural Theology, the rationalistic arguments of Augustine about original sin, and those of Anselm about the nature of redemption. These theologies, because they take their stand outside the sphere of regeneration - a sphere which is coterminous with the community of believers - cannot do justice to the unique revelation in Christ.

13. Ibid., p.7.

14. Ibid., p.11.

The Ritschlian method up to this point, summarily speaking, entails two things: the revelation-value of Christ as the ground of knowledge for all theology, and this revelation can only be known within the community of believers. In this context, and not outside the regenerate community, the full impact of the ethical message of the Christ can be apprehended.

The method takes on a further significance when the author states his "idea of the Christian Religion". "Christianity," according to Ritschl, "resembles not a circle described from a single centre, but an ellipse which is determined by two foci."¹⁴. This dual character of the "monotheistic form of faith" vis á vis, Christianity, concerns its religious and ethical nature. Religiously, Christian knowledge proceeds from redemption through Christ, but, ethically, Christianity is concerned with the purpose of this redemption being embodied in the Kingdom of God. The latter idea, neglected in the history of Christianity, and, if not neglected, accorded a pietistic, individualistic interpretation, constitutes the teleological aspect of Jesus' vocation. Jesus, Ritschl informs us, saw in the Kingdom of God the moral end of the religious

14. Ibid., p.11.

fellowship he had to found. He did not understand by the Kingdom the common exercise of worship, but the organisation of humanity through action inspired by love. "Freedom in God, the Freedom of the children of God, is the private end of each individual Christian, as the Kingdom of God is the final end of all. And this double character of the Christian life - perfectly religious and perfectly ethical - continues, because its realisation in the life of the individual advances through the perpetual interaction of the two elements."¹⁵. The Kingdom of God is God's final end. Through the Kingdom of God, God is completed. Ritschl appears to mean that God is born or given birth to in the minds of men in the Kingdom which His Son founded. We shall have opportunity to discover his meaning in another connection.

"Christianity, then," according to Ritschl, "is the monotheistic, completely spiritual, and ethical religion, which, based on the life of its Author as Redeemer and as Founder of the Kingdom of God, consists in the freedom of the children of God, involves the impulse to conduct from the motive of love, which aims at the moral organisation of mankind, and grounds blessedness

15. Ibid., p.13.

on the relation of sonship to God, as well as on the Kingdom of God."¹⁶.

But yet a further approach to the Ritschlian method, possibly the facet which has drawn more attention, concerns Ritschl's theory of knowledge. "The scientific truth of the several truths of Christianity," Ritschl contends, "depends on their correct definition."¹⁷. The first task of systematic theology is correctly and completely to outline and clearly to settle the religious ideas or facts which are included in the conception of Christianity.¹⁸. While biblical exegesis isolates particular incidents for consideration and Biblical Theology attempts to define these ideas, some method must be devised which considers the organic relation to the whole. Each definition can only be made complete as it receives its place in a system of theology, for the truth of the particular can be understood only through its connection with the whole. How can these particular divergencies be related to the whole? How may they be defined with logical correctness, and at the same time avoid being mutually contradictory? Ritschl is of the opinion that "the correct expression of theological propositions depends on the method we follow in defining the object of cognition, that is, on the

16. Ibid., p.13.

17. Ibid., p.14.

18. Ibid., p.14.

theory of knowledge which we consciously or unconsciously obey."¹⁹. What is the theory of Knowledge adopted for this correct handling of theological data? As on other issues in his theology, he states the traditional view and offers his as a corrective. But his theory does not receive the precision which he employs in interpreting the opposing views.

By way of introducing his method of cognition, he has us to understand that his theory "is identical with the doctrine of the thing or things which form the first part of metaphysics."²⁰. But, as the Aristotelian and Platonic systems understand the doctrine of the "thing" or "things" as the superstructure of nature, the universal ground of Being which precedes and gives birth to the operations of Being, Ritschl is forced to distinguish his concept of "thinghood" from these systems. Furthermore, the superstructure of Being, or thing or things as identified with the conception of God; especially is this identification made by Christian philosophers. "That is done, however, when Aristotle gives the name of God to the idea of the highest end which he postulates as winding up the cosmic series of means and ends, and so as an expression of the unity of the world."²¹

19. Ibid, p.14.

20. Ibid, p.15-16.

21. Ibid, p.19.

But, these conceptions of world-unity, preferring proofs for the existence of the unity on teleological and cosmological speculations are unwarranted in theology. If theology's positive and proper character is to be maintained, any proof which adduces God from nature, or identifies Him with a Higher unity, is to be eschewed. The thought of God, according to Ritschl, is given. The nature of religion, being the worth of man as he distinguishes himself from the phenomena which surround him and from the influences of nature which press in on him, precludes any knowledge of God devised from theoretical, abstract speculations. While not quarrelling with the "given-ness" quality of religion, we may desire further distinctions from our author. His point of view on the matter is, however, clarified by examining the three forms of the theory of knowledge which, so he informs us, have been recognised in European thought. epis

These three forms of epistemological thought are the Platonico-scholastic, the Kantian and the Lotsian. The first is due to the stimulus received from Plato. This form found a home in the realm of scholasticism. This theory

Ritschl defines as the notion that the thing-in-itself abides as an unchanging, identical unity, behind the masks or qualities through which it acts upon us. On this view, in their separation of the essence and attributes of God and God's operations in the world, the thing-in-itself can be known apart from its effects. "The fault of this conception of the thing or object of knowledge appears in the inconsistency that the thing is conceived to be at rest and, at the same time, is to work upon us by its manifested qualities."²² Ritschl considers that this view of the subject makes it impossible for us to understand the phenomenal marks as marks of the thing-in-itself separated from them. When, therefore, Kant declared the thing-in-itself, or the things-in-themselves, to be unknowable, he pronounced a correct judgment on the scholastic explanation of the thing. But, with regard to Kant's restriction of the knowledge of the human understanding to the world of phenomena, which is the second form, Ritschl remarks that a world of phenomena can only be "posited" as an object of knowledge on "the supposition that in them something actual, namely, the thing, really appears to us, or becomes the cause of our sensation and perception."²³ Otherwise, "it must be treated as

22. Ibid., p.19.

23. Ibid., p.19.

mere show and seeming by employment of the conception of phenomenon or appearance." Therefore, Kant contradicts his own position, "that actual things are unknowable."

A third form of the theory of cognition is that of Lotze: "In the phenomena which undergo changes in a limited space, in limited compass, and in a determinate order, we cognise the thing as the cause of the marks by which it acts upon us; as the end subserved by the marks as means; as the law of their constant changes."²⁴ This is Ritschl's own reproduction of Lotze's theory of cognition, and to it he gives his adhesion. According to the context, the thing which he maintains we know in the phenomena - appealing in support of his view to Lotze - can be nothing other than the actual thing. For it is only on condition of its manifesting itself in the phenomena that we are saved from the necessity of treating phenomena as "mere seeming." Now, comparing Ritschl's judgment on Kant's theory of cognition with what, according to his representation, Lotze teaches and he himself approves, we are warranted in stating Ritschl's view as follows: Actual things are knowable but only in phenomena, not as they are in and by themselves (not in their aseity): the thing-

24. Ibid., p.20.

in-itself remains uncognisable. If this be the understanding of Ritschl, he may be said to distinguish actual things which we cognise in phenomena from things-in-themselves which we cannot cognise. But, there is some inconsistency in Ritschl's point, or at least in the ways he elaborates his theory and separates it from Kantian notions.

He assures us that actual things are the cause of our sensations and perceptions. It would seem that the actual things which Ritschl deems to be the cause of our sensations and perceptions must be identical with things-in-themselves. But, in his exposition, he himself designates the things which Kant pronounces unknowable as actual things, while, a few lines before, he had made the remark that Kant declared things-in-themselves to be unknowable.²⁵ These same things which Kant considered unknowable, Ritschl defines at one time as things-in-themselves, at another as actual things. It would appear, therefore, that he deems the actual things to be the things-in-themselves; and that he is unable to uphold the distinction which he himself had posited between them.

An inconsistency like this, occurring in the space of a few lines, shows how impossible it is

25. Ibid., p.19.

to distinguish the one from the other. The things which, according to Ritschl's teaching, we know in phenomena, either have no real existence in distinction from the phenomena, or they possess actual, objective reality. But, if these actual things are the cause of our sensations and perceptions, they must be identical with the things-in-themselves. Again, if the two are identical, there are only two alternatives - either, the actual things are as unknowable as the things-in-themselves, and then we know nothing actual at all, our knowledge is unsubstantial and without object; or, things-in-themselves, in some sense which cannot here be more exactly determined, are, like the actual things, knowable. This being the case, we should know things-in-themselves in phenomena, and the former could no longer, therefore, be abstractly separated from the latter. In other words, the thing-in-itself must be held to manifest itself in the phenomenal. We should thus have a theory that preserved the objectivity and reality of human knowledge. But, this is not Ritschl's intention. Had he adopted such a theory of cognition as the groundwork of his theology,

the latter would have had to undergo a radical transformation. He rather asserts the unknowableness of the thing-in-itself, yet he is at the same time anxious to hold fast the reality of the phenomenal, for he teaches that something actual is presented in it, which is different from the phenomenal and gives it reality - though it is not the thing-in-itself.

Ritschl refers all who wish to gain a fuller understanding of his theory of cognition to his treatise on "Theology and Metaphysics." This, accordingly, we must extract a statement from; we read there as follows: "The phenomena which are perceived in a limited space-form as always existing or succeeding each other in the same way, and undergoing alteration with defined limits and in a defined order, our faculty of representation combines into a unity called thing after the analogy of the cognising soul, which feels and resembles itself to be an abiding unity in the midst of every changing sensation."²⁶ According to this statement, a thing is a unity which we ourselves confer in our conception upon a sum of perceived phenomena; in other words,

26. Ritschl, "Theology and Metaphysics" - p.10.

it is merely a represented, not an actual unity; nay more, a unity which we form after the analogy of our own soul. Then, by thing, or the actual, it would appear is to be understood a unity which we for our minds constitute out of a sum of phenomena. The thing as such, therefore, so far as it is opposed to and isolated from phenomenon, is, according to Ritschl, "a purely formal conception without content."²⁷ But then, if things as such, in distinction from phenomena, are purely formal concepts, it becomes impossible to maintain their reality. Ritschl teaches that a world of phenomena can be regarded as an object of knowledge "only on the assumption that something actual, namely, the thing, manifests itself in them, or becomes the cause of sensation and perception; otherwise, phenomena must be treated as mere illusion." In other words, the reality of phenomena rests on the fact that something actual, namely, the thing, manifests itself to us. But, what is that which appears in a phenomenon and which we know therein? The answer is given - purely formal concepts appear or manifest themselves therein; in other words, mere modifications or functions of our understanding. It would seem that the world of phenomena is thus transformed

27. Ibid., p.18.

into the shadow of concepts. If the thing itself, as distinguished from phenomenon, be declared to be only a purely formal concept, the reality of phenomena is jeopardised. The same dissipation of the thing-in-itself may be levelled against Ritschl's theory. He appears to identify the thing-in-itself with the memory image. These memory-images are of actualities which themselves have no existence, save of phenomena of consciousness.

Concerning the "abiding unity", viz. the soul in the midst of ever-changing sensations, his strictures on the scholastic psychology might be levelled against his assumptions. The psychology which gives rise to the self-enclosed life of the spirit, the scene of the unio mystica, exists behind the special activities of feeling, thinking and willing. The soul, according to Ritschl's understanding of this view-point, remains at rest in its self-equivalence, as the unity of its diverst powers, the faculties.²⁸ This separation between the activities of the soul and its self-existence lies at the root of the individualistic, pietistic doctrine of salvation - a doctrine which Ritschl is anxious

28. Ritschl, "Justification and Reconciliation" -
page 20.

to oppose. While rejecting the result of this scheme, it does not appear that Ritschl realises that the so-called organising faculty, the cognising soul, must be to some extent at rest behind the manifold activities and functions. Yet, we are told in his discussion of the doctrine of unio mystica that we are not to assume that the soul has a different, a more proper or real mode of being behind volition and cognition; on the contrary, the soul is present in the functions which are its phenomenon. But, where is the essentially real soul which was supposed to underlie our volition and cognition, of which volition and cognition are the manifestations or activities? There **is** no such thing as the soul-in-itself, if all things-in-themselves are to be treated as mere abstractions. The soul on this reckoning is a mere representation - a unity of its qualities. The qualities are these: these qualities we represent to ourselves as a unity; and this representation is the soul, a mere product of the synthetic impulse of consciousness. These remarks force us to the conclusion that there is no religious subject of which religion can be predicated. Dr. Garvie in his "The Ritschlian Theology", quotes an

Dr. Garvie, Alfred, "The Ritschlian Theology" -
 p. 13-14 - quoted from "The Ritschlian
 Theology" - p. 13-14
 Dr. Garvie, Alfred, "The Ritschlian Theology" -

indictment made against Ritschl's views by Pfleiderer. "It explains (Ritschl's ideas on the unity and manifoldness of the self or the cognizing soul) the unity of the ego as appearance, and only the manifoldness of the functions as the reality; but, how this appearance could even be brought about, how the actual consciousness of an identity of the ego, how the continuity of the consciousness, how recollection from one day to another, is to be possible if there were in us only changing functions and not a permanent unity, from which they proceed, and into which they return, depositing there their results; that is, and remains hereby, wholly incomprehensible."²⁹.

Ritschl attaches primary significance to a self-sufficient moral character; and Pfleiderer justifiably asks: "Where, then, does there remain the possibility of such a character, if our being were nothing else than the ever-changing current of the conscious activities and appearances, if behind this manifold and changeable there were not to be assumed an existent unity as the ground of the unity of consciousness, and as the ordering and ruling power in the surging chaos of the appearance of consciousness?"³⁰.

29. Garvie, Alfred, "The Ritschlian Theology"-
p.139-140 - quoted from Pfleiderer's
"Die Ritsch'sche Theologie" - p.11-12.

30. Ibid., p.139-140.

While Garvie points out that Ritschl modifies his view in other matters, in particular his analysis of the idea of personality, it would appear his stringent opposition to the idea of a self at rest behind the phenomena - the idea of mysticism, Platonism, Neo-Platonism and Scholasticism - prevents him from inferring that the subject, while being manifest and active in its attributes and operations, is not exhausted or fully comprehended by these empirical variations. Concentrating on the signs and predicates of the subject, as we shall note in Ritschl's Christology, he remains agnostic or opposed to any inferences concerning the nature of the self or cognizing soul which lies behind the phenomena.

But, Ritschl's theory of cognition, whether Kantian or Lotzian or a modification and adaption of both, does not concern us. We are more interested in the effects which his epistemology had on his theological system. Consequently, in the elaboration of his methodology, we may take two further points which follow from his theory of cognition, viz. the separation of religious knowledge from theoretical knowledge and the notion of value

judgments. The latter being the way religious objects are to be known and received.

The separation of religious and theoretical or scientific knowledge may be termed the second epistemological canon which Ritschl adopts. This principle is implicit in Ritschl's definition of religion and the function of religion. He comments on the essential task of religion and his position enables us to grasp the separation which is effected between two branches of knowledge, e.g. spirit and nature. "All religions aspire," according to Ritschl, "with the aid of the Higher powers which man reverences, to the solution of the contradiction which he recognises as existing between himself as a part of the natural world and himself as a spiritual personality claiming to rule the world. Considered from the one point of view, man is a part of nature, without independence, hemmed in on all hands by other things; considered from the other point of view, that is, as spirit, his aim and destiny are to assert and maintain his independence. Situated thus, there springs up in him the faith in superior spiritual powers by whose help his own power is in some way or other to be supplemented, or raised to the rank

of a whole sui generis, capable of resisting the pressure of the natural world."³¹.

The contrast between man's inner freedom and his outward dependence on nature constitutes for Ritschl the root of religion. Being at one and at the same time part of nature and independent of nature, when man reflects on his situation, attempting in the process to maintain his independence to nature, religion comes into existence. This view of the origin of religion springs from one of Kant's ideas. One of the things postulated of the practical reason, he tells us, is the existence of God as a cause of nature distinct from nature - a cause which brings nature into harmony with morality, and this supplies a basis for the concord of happiness and duty. The reflective moral consciousness is basic and the religious content seems secondary. Religion becomes in this reasoning no more than a stop-gap or makeshift until such time as man can realise himself.

Surely Ritschl does not mean to give such a utilitarian view of the matter. Yet, in his definition of the religious and what values it accords man, viz. blessedness and independence, he does seem to call, into question the

31. Ritschl, "Justification and Reconciliation" -
page 199.

constitutive nature of religion. Religion and the blessedness which stem from God and being in the Kingdom of God, are means to an end - not ends in themselves.

It may be noted in a later context that God realises Himself in His supreme end, the Kingdom of God. It would appear that God becomes subservient to man and must become complete, fulfilled in man. In His final end, the Kingdom of God, God is, or God realises, Himself. Of course, in this scheme it must be remembered that Ritschl, working on his theory of knowledge, cannot infer any determinations in God before God is known in and through His Son and through the Son, the author of the Community, in the Kingdom of God.

The function of religious knowledge and its distinction from theoretical knowledge may be detected on another level - a level which may touch on Ritschl's third epistemological canon, that of the value-judgment.

He says concerning the knowledge of God... (It) "can only then be shown to be religious knowledge when God is concerned in guaranteeing to the believer a position in the world such as counterbalances the hindrances which arise from

the world. Apart from this value-judgment through faith, there is no knowledge of God which can be considered worthy of the name."³². Religious knowledge is concerned with the relation of the blessedness guaranteed by God and aimed at man, to the entirety of the world created by God and directed to the end He has in view.

Properly speaking, Ritschl was concerned to emphasise the distinction which had been blurred by traditional metaphysics, between nature and spirit. He was, at least in his first volume, in agreement with Kant's proof for the existence of God. Garvie gives us a summary of this point as it is contained in Kant's "Critique of Judgment"... "On the one hand, the idea of God herein suffers no mutilation, as God is expressly recognized as rational and moral author and guide of the world; and, on the other hand, the knowledge of the laws of our conduct is at the same time theoretical knowledge; that is, knowledge of the laws of our spiritual life. And theoretical knowledge has also the task to seek a law of the co-existence of the two systems of reality, the sensuous and the moral."³³. As it stands in this context, science and religion are related at a theoretical level. Mozley and Garvie, in their discussion of the

32. Ibid., p.200.

33. Garvie, p.84.

Ritschlian system, point out Ritschl's agreement with this unification of the spheres of nature and of ethics, natural and moral good. But, in the interests of a more radical distinction between the practical value of religion and the inability of speculative reason apart from the Christian faith to solve the problem of existence, Ritschl states his position: "This acceptance of the idea of God is, as Kant observes of practical faith, and not an act of theoretical knowledge...If, accordingly, the correspondence of Christianity with reason is hereby proved, it is still taken for granted that the knowledge of God finds expression in another kind of judgment than that of theoretical knowledge of the world."³⁴.

In the interests of the moral life, and not theoretical, detached observation, the idea of God must be assumed. This assumption of God, the worth of God to the practical reason, leads us to discuss possibly one of the most debateable Ritschlian ideas, the value-judgment theory. Rather than concentrate on the two domains of knowledge, that of science with its disinterested pursuit of unity and of religion with its

34. Ritschl, "Just. & Recon." - p.222.

functioning in the moral sphere of the world, and the various vacillations and polemical thought thrust forward to justify this dualism in knowledge, we may move to some consideration of his judgments of value. This canon of knowledge, or the manner in which knowledge is to be appropriated, will be of inestimable worth when Ritschl's Christology is presented.

Ritschl poses the question: "How is religious knowledge related to theoretical or philosophical knowledge?"³⁵. He endeavours to give an answer to the question by assessing the material dealt with by each discipline. Each knowledge deals with the world as a whole; each knowledge attempts to comprehend the Universe under one supreme law. Thus, no principle of discrimination between the two kinds of knowledge is to be found in the object, namely, the world, with which they both deal.

If not the object or the content distinguishes the two types of knowledge, may we not reach some distinction through assuming the manner in which the object is appropriated, or, that is, what ways are used to determine the value of and nature of the object? Ritschl says that all knowledge, whether philosophical, scientific or religious,

35. Ibid., p.203.

is appropriated from the vantage point of interest. On the basis of the two-fold function of spirit, pain and pleasure, knowledge becomes valueable to the person who assesses these sensations. "Value-judgments, therefore, are determinative in the case of all connected knowledge of the world, even when carried out in the most objective fashion...Without interest we do not trouble ourselves about anything."³⁶

But, if the two types of knowledge deal with the same object from the same motive, vis a vis interest, how are we to distinguish between these disciplines? Ritschl postulates the distinction in his two-fold value-judgment theory. Concomitant or accompanying value-judgments pertain to theoretical cognition, while independent judgments have to do with practical, religious knowledge. Describing the latter, he says of the realm in which they are made: "Religious knowledge moves in independent value-judgments, which relate to man's attitude to the world and call forth feelings of pleasure or pain, in which man either enjoys the dominion over the world vouchsafed him by God, or feels grievously the lack of God's help to that end."³⁷ Religious judgments

36. Ibid., p.204.

37. Ibid., p.205.

formed on the basis of the elevation of the person above the world in the Kingdom of God, indicate the value of this attitude taken up by believers towards the world. Religious knowledge, unlike scientific knowledge, which proceeds on the basis of observation and ascertainable laws of human cognition, deals with the blessedness which is assured by God and sought by man. When scientific knowledge seeks for a unified view of the world, it, so Ritschl claims, betrays an implicit religious impulse - one that should be distinguished from the cognitive methods they follow. When this knowledge deduces the world as a whole, it departs from the strict application of the philosophical method. This heterogenous mixture of two principles, on the one hand, the empirical, and, on the other, the intuitive and imaginative, does not satisfy the religious conscience. The rigidly unified view of the world gained by this philosophic approach runs counter to, and is incompatible with, the religious view of the world. The religious desire for a complete view of things is not properly distinguished from scientific cognition; thus, the claim, called by Ritschl, "self-deception", that the laws of theoretical

knowledge are the laws of the human spirit in all its functions.³⁸ On this base, philosophy relegates theology to the region of the fanciful. In this philosophy, eg. Pantheism, the personality of God and man is called into question. But, in Ritschl's violent anti-Hegelianism, does he understand how much his Kingdom of God idea, regardless of the value he attached to the individual, may be accused of the same subjugation of the individual to the community, the particular to the regulative principle, the Community or the Idea of Community?

Defining religious knowledge more precisely, Ritschl states his agreement with Luther. The latter bases religious apprehension on the worth of such knowledge for the person concerned. The nature of God and Christ are known only in their worth for us. "Apart from this value-judgment of faith, there exists no knowledge of God worth of this content."³⁹ The content here signifying the position secured to the believer in the world which more than counterbalances its restrictions. God and faith to Luther and Ritschl, according

38. Ibid., p.210.

39. Ibid., p.210.

to Ritschl, are inseparable conceptions.

"Faith, however, confessedly does not consist in abstract knowledge, or knowledge which deals with merely historical facts."⁴⁰ The "goodness and power" of God, on which faith casts itself, is revealed in the work of Christ alone. Apart from this independent judgment - a judgment which excludes the possibility of "disinterested" knowledge of God - there can be no knowledge of God in Christ. Ritschl's point is that..."in religious cognition, the idea of God is dependent on the presupposition that man opposes himself to the world of nature, and secures his position in or over it by faith in God."⁴¹

Ritschl seems to detect the accusation of "dualism" in the realm of knowledge when he discusses Kant's inability to co-ordinate these two heterogenous orders of reality, the practical and the theoretical reason. While Kant abandons the attempt to discover a principle which would unify spirit and nature, practical and theoretical reason, Ritschl believes that it is the task of cognition to seek some unity in, and co-existence of, the two ways of knowing. God, on the basis of Kantian philosophy, can be adequately

40. Ibid., p.212.

41. Ibid., p.219.

demonstrated for the practical reason. The reality of God is rooted solely in the use of freedom according to moral laws, and does not arise out of the investigation of nature, and thus possesses only subjective-practical reality.⁴² Kant does not, according to Ritschl's interpretation, start from the idea of God, nor from a preconceived idea of the world; rather, he finds the final unity of his knowledge of the world in the Christian idea of God, and that, too, in such a way as to limit that idea to the sphere of religious knowledge. But, Ritschl quarrels with Kant's separation of the practical and theoretical spheres of knowledge. "He," according to Ritschl, "failed to estimate the practical Reason at its proper value. If the exertion of moral will is a reality, then the practical Reason is a branch of theoretical cognition. These two positions Kant never reached. The reason of this failure lies in the fact that, with him, sensibility is the characteristic mark of reality. Therefore, too, he declares the conception of God to be theoretically impossible, and abandons it to the practical Reason...Kant wrongly let himself be

42. Ibid., p.220.

persuaded by this specific quality of the spiritual life, (that is to say, the practical laws which declare spirit to be an end in itself), to oppose Practical Reason as one species of Reason, to theoretical Reason as another...And yet, knowledge of the laws of action is also theoretical knowledge, for it is knowledge of the laws of spiritual life."⁴³.

How does Ritschl propose to integrate these two realms? His argument is rather sketchy in places but he seems to use the same method as he condemns in Kant. While Kant abandoned the attempt to discover, by the methods of theoretical cognition, a principle which would unite spirit and nature in one, and bids us explain the combination of both in a single world through practical faith in God, conceived as endowed with the attributes which Christianity ascribes to Him, Ritschl is convinced that he knows Kant's reason for this division. "One circumstance which co-operated to produce this conclusion is doubtless the fact that all knowledge of nature, as subject to law, depends on the practical presupposition that nature exists for the human spirit."⁴⁴. But, does not Ritschl come to the same impasse when he remarks: "Now

43. Ibid., p.221-222.

44. Ibid., p.223.

the impulses of knowledge, of feeling, and of aesthetic intuition, of will in general and in its special application to society, and, finally, the impulse of religion in the general sense of the word, all concur to demonstrate that spiritual life is the end, while nature is the means. This is the general law of spiritual life, the validity of which science must maintain if the special character of the spiritual realm of existence is not to be ignored."⁴⁵.

And, further, when he announces the manner in which the two realms are unified, he perpetuates a duality. "Now we must either resign the attempt to comprehend the ground and law of the co-existence of nature and spiritual life, or we must, to attain our end, acknowledge the Christian conception of God as the truth by which our knowledge of the universe is consummated."⁴⁶. If science refuses to acknowledge that nature is knowable and is known only because it exists for spirit, science would disobey the impulse to complete itself. But, such a renunciation does not impair the practical validity of religious faith in God in the Christian sense. Nature, we are told by Ritschl, is viewed in two ways. Theoretical

45. Ibid., p.222.

46. Ibid., p.223.

knowledge treats it as something which exists for it. Practical knowledge treats it as something which exists for it. Practical knowledge considers nature as something which is directly a means to the realisation of the common ethical end which forms the final end of the world. If nature is subservient to spirit, and the moral fellowship transcends nature, then the ground of both lies in a Divine Will which creates the world with spiritual life as its final end. "To accept the idea of God in this way is, as Kant observes, practical faith, and not an act of theoretical cognition. While, therefore, the Christian religion is thereby proved to be in harmony with reason, it is always with the reservation that knowledge of God embodies itself in judgments which differ in kind from those of theoretical science.,.,As Kant was first to show, the Christian view of God, and the world enables us comprehensively to unify our knowledge of nature and the spiritual life of man in a way which otherwise is impossible..When we have once got a true conception of this point, a review of the moral constitution of man, based upon

the principles of Kant, will serve as the ratio cognoscendi of the validity of the Christian idea of God when employed as the solution of the enigma of the world."⁴⁷.

Has Ritschl gone beyond the Kantian dualism? While noting the separation of the spheres of knowing, disagreeing with the lack of unity in Kant, Ritschl, in his characteristic manner of going around the point, posits the same dichotomy. But, to return to value-judgments for some further light on Ritschl's view of knowledge.

The Ritschlians, in their emphasis on value-judgments, endeavour to distinguish the kind of evidence on which our common experiences of the world rests from that which underlies our moral and religious beliefs in goodness, God and the significance of the Christ.

The theoretical judgments are concerned with causes, and the value-judgments with purposes. The former relate each object to its conditions in the world-whole; the latter relate it to the ends which man sets before himself; the former answer the question how, the latter the question why; the former end

47. Ibid., p.225-226.

in a metaphysic, the latter in a theology. Herrmann says this of the distinction: "When I seek to represent the world-whole, because I wish to comprehend the multiplicity of things in a never-failing context of law, then I go in the way of metaphysics. When I seek to represent a world-whole, because I do not wish to lose myself as a person conscious of my highest good in the multiplicity of things; then I receive the impulse to religious faith."⁴⁸.

On their reckoning, the investigation of causes can never lead to the discovery of the secret of the universe, while the interpretation of purposes may. The theoretical judgments cannot give an intelligible unity to the world-whole, but the value-judgments can. The theoretical judgments are subordinated to value-judgments by the nature of the approach and ends pursued by the latter.

Yet, there are varying interpretations in the Ritschlian school. Kaftan, for instance, moves the epistemological canon on another level when he says that religious knowledge consists of theoretical propositions which are bases on value-judgments. The theoretical judgments

48. Garvie, p.175.

express a fact and the value-judgments or religious propositions give expression to the attitude taken toward the fact.

On Ritschl's view of value-judgments, it would appear that religious knowledge never gets beyond the consciousness of its subjective certainty, whereas, according to Kaftan, it may attain a consciousness of objective validity, although reached only by subjective evidence. This pinpoints the difficulties which Ritschlian thought, while endeavouring to break loose from this objective-subjective way of thinking and speaking, incurs. They are so intent on distinguishing the kind of evidence on which our common experience of the world rests from that which underlies our moral and religious beliefs in God and Christ that they seem to withdraw religion into a small province of its own. This withdrawal of religion encourages subjectivism and illusionism. Though it must be remembered that Ritschl, on the other hand, attached a rather, shall we say, naïve realism to objective facts. As we shall soon see, the Ritschlian attachment to the particular historic facts concerning Jesus is, as one writer has described their view,

"The plain man's attitude to plain facts."⁴⁹. Value-judgments may be the way the facts are interpreted by the religious mind, but these facts are in every sense of the word objective, real and historically verifiable. But, as we shall soon discover, Ritschl and his followers were caught in this objective-subjective way of viewing reality. In their swing from idealism and the romanticism of Schleiermacher, they move toward, though this was one of the trends of their era, viewing the empirical as the real.

3. Christological Problems:

The Post-Hegelians, Dorner and Rothe and the school of Schleiermacher, had tried to explicate the relationship between the historic Christ and the Christian consciousness. But, this "mediating" point of view, as it has been termed, could not reply to the Hegelianism of Strauss who maintained that it was only to ideas about the historical Christ that the passage really led. Ritschl, eschewing any vague speculations about the nature of Christ or how

49. Quick, Oliver, "Liberalism, Modernism and Tradition" - p.5.

we travel from Christian experience to the historic Christ, endeavoured to give an answer to this difficulty by bringing in focus the "facts" or "record" of the historic Christ. Simply stated, the effect wrought by viewing the portraits of the Christ and the New Testament, or by hearing of these from those who had been spiritually recreated by the viewing, is the only source of religious experience. The knowledge of God lay in the actual happenings of the facts. The actuality of the events perform their work through the record in the present. There is produced in the individual, from the reading of the facts, a correspondence - a correspondence of something with themselves, with something in Christ as he stands revealed in the pages of the New Testament record. Christian experience and the historic Christ are given together; and in knowing anything of the first you must and do know the second as its source.

In this summary treatment, we detect the Ritschlian method inferring from the effects to the source, deriving the subject from the predicates. In our brief survey of Ritschl's

Christological construction, a primary question will concern the nature of the "facts" of the revelation. Are these facts of one piece with secular history, or are these so-called facts significant only to the Church? Does Ritschl treat these "facts" in a vacuum, that is, completely secularise all history except that bound up with the revelation. As we examine his Christology from a closer range, we will want to bear in mind whether the ground plan of his theology and Christology, e.g. centering everything in the "historic record" or New Testament "facts", is theologically sound. In the background, we should allow his definition of the function of religion, viz. the consciousness of freedom and victory over the world, of deliverance and uplift into a spiritual realm, and the aim of Christianity, as the establishment of a community of moral and free men, to prepare us for the steps which Ritschl will take in developing his Christology.

As a preparatory step, or the foreshadowing of his handling of the historic Jesus, we must record Ritschl's distinction from any of his predecessors and contemporaries in the general place given in his theology to the revelation of the Son. In his third volume, he says of

theological knowledge: "As theology has to do with the God revealed in Christ, this is justified scientifically as the only practicable form of the conception of God. The content of the Divine Will is to be deduced from the revealed reciprocal relations between Christ and God, and from no other principle."⁵⁰ If God is conceived as love, and if He is known experientally and experimentally, He is known in and through the relation of His Will to His Son and the community of the Kingdom of God.. "He (God) is not conceived as being anything apart from and prior to His self-determination as love.. God is love, inasmuch as He reveals Himself through His Son to the community, which He has founded, in order to form it into the Kingdom of God, so that in designing for men this supra-mundane destiny, He realises His own glory, or the fulfillment of His personal end... Herein is the love of God perfected, that we love our brethren in the Kingdom of God. (1 John IV.12). But, as, from our point of view, this consummation always appears as one yet to be attained, our progress towards it is guided by our perception of the

50. Ritschl, p.237.

truth that, for us, the love of God, in his relation to His Son our Lord, is an assured fact."⁵¹ Describing this regulative principle, e.g. the Kingdom of God, Ritschl focuses his point in another vein. "The creation of this fellowship of love among men, accordingly, is not merely the end of the world, but, at the same time, the completed revelation of God Himself, beyond which none other and none higher can be conceived. This principle supplies a basis for that religious and theological way of looking at the world, which sets itself in opposition to those Areopagitic conclusions whose baneful after-effects are present in all forms of Orthodoxy. Instead of holding with Thomas Aquinas that God's personal end has no relation to the end of the world, we find not only that God's personal end and the end of the world are one, but, also, that the knowledge of the end of the world is attainable by us, coincides with the Christian idea of the nature and the completed revelation of God."⁵² Ritschl states the self-end and completion of God realisable in the Community in a more obvious manner in a later context.. "The end (the creation

51. Ibid., p.282.

52. Ibid., p.291.

of the Kingdom of God) embraced as it is in the Divine self-end, stands nearer to His eternal will than the creatures, which are merely means to its realisation.....Accordingly, the idea of the community's eternal election denotes only the value which belongs to the community of the Kingdom of God, as the divine final end, in contrast with the world, which is, in comparison, merely a means."⁵³.

While Ritschl, in these passages, endeavours to reckon with the eternality of God's purpose viz. "the Kingdom of God as the correlate of His loving Will;" by beginning with the empirical community founded by the Son, he throws some doubt on the "completeness" of God prior to His realisation in the community. Trying to explain the "intention" of God and the realisation of His purpose in the preparatory creations, Ritschl's theory of Knowledge is strained to the breaking point. Not only do his views on the "absoluteness" and "completeness" of God come in for serious questioning, but when he says.... "the creatures (the world)....are means to its (eternal will) realisation," he encourages a criticism which has been levelled against

53. Ibid., p.301.

Hegelianism - namely, without the world God would not be God. In these above passages, God seems lost in His Kingdom and, in the process of becoming completed, the means (His creation) is depersonalised. But, these thoughts are not central to our primary enquiry - that of determining the place of the historical Jesus in Ritschl's grand scheme. Before we lose ourselves in these digressions, though each seems to be an important facet of Ritschl's point of view, we may turn to his Christology. Yet, we must turn our attention to another sidelight, called by Ritschl "the regulative principle" of his theology: the Kingdom of God.

The theologian who looks disdainfully on any speculative theology undermines his case when he comes to specifying his ideas on various Christian doctrines. According to Ritschl, "It is of the greatest importance for the systematic procedure of theology that this difference, between individual religious thinking and the form of theological cognition *sub specie aeternitatis*, should never be forgotten. Our self-consciousness is bound up with time, and it is never given us to survey

the whole of the divine order within which we move as parts, so that we simply cannot but regard and judge our relation to God under the form of time."⁵⁴. Yet, this theologian, in postulating God's final end in the Kingdom of God, the correlate of his Love, engages in a flight of speculation similar to the metaphysical theories of which he is so polemically critical. While rejecting the metaphysical forms of theology, Ritschl, in his Kingdom of God idea, gives us a speculative deduction of the Kingdom of God from the love of God. His argument, called by Brunner some form of ethical metaphysics, may be summarily treated. God is love, inasmuch as He reveals Himself through His son to the community founded by Him, in order to develop it into the Kingdom of God, so that He realises in this supermundane purposeful distinction of men His fulfillment of His purpose of Himself.

Through the importance which Ritschl attaches to his own theory - an importance which stands out the more clearly in view of his highly critical comments on those who dissented from it - we may be led to feel that Ritschl's severe strictures on all speculative metaphysics, as distinct from any particular metaphysical system, are not warranted by his own practice. Professor Orr's

54. Ritschl, p.325.

striking indictment of the system should be noted at this stage.. "Through its avowed dependence on a 'theory of knowledge'; it is controlled at every point by metaphysics. The question, Ritschl says, is not as to whether, but as to what metaphysics is to be employed in theology."⁵⁵ Though Mozley, in his study of Ritschlianism, takes issue with this indictment, saying that we cannot identify a theory of knowledge with a metaphysic,⁵⁶ we may say with Dr. Garvie that Ritschl identified the two. Couching his disagreements with Plato and Kant in an epistemological manner may be justifiable so far as their theories of knowledge extend, but, when Ritschl proceeds to speak of the Thing-in-itself and the Thing-for-us, he derives some sort of metaphysic in the process. Swing points out that Ritschl recognised that in using a theory of knowledge he is using a metaphysical aid. Swing quotes from Ritschl to substantiate his observation. "It is an inconsiderate and incredible assertion that I exclude all metaphysics from theology.. I follow a theory of knowledge which, in the determination of the objects of knowledge, is governed by a conception

55. Orr, "The Ritschlian Theology" - p.237.

56. Mozley, "Ritschlianism, An Essay" - p.15.

of the thing, and, consequently, it is metaphysical. Consequently, the controversy between Luhardt and myself, when rightly formulated, is only as to what metaphysics is justified in theology."⁵⁷.

These additional preparatory remarks bring in focus two things. (1) It is from the revelation in the Son that theology takes its leave, and (2) The Son is an agent through which God was to realise His final end in the Kingdom of God. Who then is the Son? How is His Person to be spoken of? Ritschl's Christology is based primarily on Christ's human achievements and, on the basis of Ritschl's 'theory of Knowledge', e.g. the subject is known through the predicates or effects, this is not surprising. Through these achievements, and not some objective, detached formulae.. "His Godhead becomes for His People manifest, conspicuous, intelligible, winning our faith, not in the form of assent to an unintelligible dogma, but of personal trust for our salvation."⁵⁸. To approach his meaning for us, we have, so Ritschl remarks, a new idea of faith. Faith, according to Ritschl, is no longer an assent to revealed

57. Swing, p.76-77, quoted from Ritschl's "Theology and Metaphysic" - p.38.

58. Ritschl, p.394.

dogma, but faith consists in confidence toward God. It follows from this, confidence is a trust in Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit and a recognition of the Godhead of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. "Knowledge of God," Ritschl informs us in another section of his system, "can be demonstrated as religious knowledge only when He is conceived as securing to the believer such a position in the world as more than counter-balances its restrictions. Apart from this value-judgment of faith, there exists no knowledge of God worthy of this content. So that we ought not to strive after a purely theoretical and 'disinterested' knowledge of God, as an indispensable preliminary to the knowledge of faith. The trust rather is that we know the nature of God and Christ only in their worth for us. For God and faith are inseparable conceptions; faith, however, confessedly does not consist in abstract knowledge, or knowledge which deals with merely historical facts."⁵⁹ That is, as we are told, the religious estimate of Christ - an estimate which Luther distinguished from a theoretical exposition of the Christological dogma. It is, then, not to the abstract,

59. Ritschl, p.212.

theoretical claims of His person, but to His vocation, his own experience of realising that independence toward the world which through Him has become the experience of the members of His Community, that must form the fabric of a Christological discussion.

The religious significance and worth of Christ is discoverable in His work and what this work has effected in the Community. "The nature of God and the Divine we can only know in its essence by determining its value for our salvation."⁶⁰ This primary factor, called by Ritschl, a "direct value-judgment",⁶¹ is contrary to the disinterested, scientific knowledge of the early Church formulae of two natures. The Godhead of Christ is an attribute revealed to us in His saving influence upon ourselves. "We must," we are cautioned by Ritschl, "first be able to prove the Godhead that is revealed before we take account of the Godhead that is eternal...If the exalted Christ or the eternal Godhead is to be reckoned with in the Christian faith, it must be demonstrated to us in the historic Christ. Moreover, it must be laid down clearly that the attribute of Godhead thus ascribed to Christ is based on the personal

60. Ibid., p.398.

61. Ibid., p.398.

experience of his disciples."⁶². The Godhead of Christ, by way of elaborating this essential criterion, must find its form in the historical figure of Jesus. The Godhead or Universal Lordship of Christ must be apprehended in definite functions of his historical life, as an attribute of his existence in time. For what Christ is in virtue of His eternal destiny, and what the influences in which He exerts on us because of His exaltation to God, would be wholly beyond our ken if we did not also experience the effects of the same in His existence in them. Unless the conception of His present Lordship receives its content from the definite characteristics of His historical activity, then it is either a meaningless formula or the occasion for all kinds of extravagance.⁶³.

The religious estimate of the Godhead or divinity of Christ is rooted in the historical Jesus and, more specifically, in his visible conduct and ethical convictions. Our concern, according to Ritschl, is not with the endowment of His Person with inborn qualities or powers. He exerts an influence only through His ethical action and not, as is traditionally assumed, through the supremacy of His Person.

62. Ibid., p.406.

63. Ibid., p. 406.

Faced with the claim that Jesus' ethical apprehensions were often inapt by present-day Western conscience, Ritschl asserts that Jesus' religious dignity does not depend upon the unbroken completeness of His ethical views, nor does it simply mean that Jesus provides a moral code for the details of life. The founder of a religion, "the bearer of the perfect spiritual religion, had for his central mission the end of God - the union of mankind through love. Through Him, men are led in accepting their view of the world. The theological solution of the problem of Christ's Divinity must, therefore, be based upon an analysis of what He has done for the salvation of mankind in the form of the community."⁶⁴

What Christ is for us must verify itself in the transferring of His worth to us. The recognition of Jesus as the Christ has for us no meaning unless through Him we know ourselves raised to Kingship or dominion over the world, and to priesthood or undisturbed communion with God. Only in relation to these practical ends will even an objective theological discussion of the statements of the Creed satisfy the religious interest.⁶⁵

64. Ibid., p.417.

65. Ibid., p.418.

After choosing from Ritschl's position several themes which determine his Christology, we may turn now to the essential work of the Christ. The purpose of the work, it is remembered, is to secure for men freedom with regard to the world and with regard to sin, and freedom in their intercourse with God. The essential contribution which Ritschl claims to make to a discussion of Christology lies in bringing the specific significance of the Person of Christ for the Christian view of the world and the sense of personal worth into relation with the attainment of our own personal independence over against the world. The origin of the Person of Christ - how His person attained the form in which it presents itself to our ethical and religious apprehension - is not a subject for theological inquiry, because the problem transcends all inquiry, according to Ritschl's 'theory of knowledge'.

Traditional Christology based its discussion of Jesus on the three offices or functions. i.e. Priestly, Kingly and prophetic. But, these divisions of the work of Christ, according to Ritschl, have tended to fragmentise the life

instead of devising some ultimate unity.

Organic unity may be arrived at if the three offices are understood not as separate or distinct functions, but as coalescing and reaching some matrix in the founding and maintenance of the community of believers. The regulative principle for understanding theology and the proper task of theology, viz. explicating a knowledge of God through His Son, is the Kingship of Christ or the Kingdom of God. (Jesus)...

"as the founder of the Kingdom of God in the world, in other words, as the Bearer of God's ethical Lordship over men, occupies a unique position toward all who have received a like aim from Him; therefore, He is that Being in the world in whose self-end God makes effective and manifest after an original manner His own eternal self-end, whose whole activity, therefore, in discharge of His vocation, forms the material of that complete revelation of God which is present in Him, in whom, in short, the word of God is a human person."⁶⁶

66. Ibid., p.45.

4. Vocation: Mission of Jesus:

Ritschl considers the work of Jesus in a two-fold manner. In describing the vocation of Jesus, what Jesus accomplished becomes the goal and end of the Community. Ritschl selects two traits of Jesus' character which become the center of his Christological constructions. We shall allow these two ideas tell the story of Ritschl's doctrine of the Person and Work of the Christ.

(1) Though born an Israelite, Jesus raised Himself above these particular earthly limitations of His existence. In His own person he realised that Universal human nature which is required by the idea of His vocation. "The fact of His belonging to one particular nation in reality only serves Him as a means of fulfilling His vocation; inwardly He is untrammelled by any constraint of earthly prejudice reflecting the narrow spirit of the family or the nation."⁶⁷ His religious judgment of Himself was independent of all Old Testament standards. This exercise of the supremacy over the world, especially when the exalted Christ is considered, is not through might or power. It is (the supremacy).. "anything but a fact of objective and palpable

67. Ibid., p.459.

experience...the power, over the world which Paul ascribes to the Christian, and which must serve as our guiding analogy in interpreting the original assertion of Christ, falls entirely within the sphere of the spiritual, and cannot become palpable or evident in any corresponding degree. If, therefore, our concern be to find in the historical portrait of Christ other proofs than those already quoted of His characteristic independence of the spirit of His nation, the inconspicuous character of these proofs cannot afford any ground for doubting the correctness of the result."⁶⁸. It is within the sphere of the invisible, according to Ritschl, that we..."can trace the advancing power of Christ over this world at all."⁶⁹.

Besides the universal human nature which Christ exemplified in his person, His patience under suffering is the other primary Ritschlian motive. (2) This patient endurance is a consequence of His loyalty to His vocation and the test of His unique power over the world. "Jesus," according to Ritschl in an effort to substantiate this second aspect of the work of Christ, "recognises His suffering to be the yoke by which He is led

68. Ibid., p.460.

69. Ibid., p.460.

of God, by whom He, the Son is first recognised."⁷⁰.
 Through His exemplary patience under sufferings, His eschewing of self-preservation, He evokes the religious motive of patience under tribulations. When He calls to Himself those who would fain crave not their own fate and are succumbing under the obstructions to their freedom, His aim is to lead them to see in their burdens dispensations of God; on these terms the said burdens will become light, because, by the patience which springs from the religious motive, men lift themselves above their misfortunes and the world... This is the proof that Jesus Himself offers us of the supremacy over the world which belongs to Himself through the mutual knowledge existing between Himself and God."⁷¹.

These two aspects of Christ's vocation, His faithfulness manifested in the discharge of His vocation and the loftiness of his self-determination as compared with the particular and natural impulses which spring from the world, are the features in the earthly life of Christ which are summed up in the attribute of His Godhead. This patience and faithfulness have

70. Ibid., p.463.

71. Ibid., p.463.

their source in the desire inspired by His vocation and sustained by His unique knowledge of God, to set up the Kingdom of God among men as their supra-mundane final end.

In the community belong those, according to Ritschl, who experience this same Lordship in themselves. Members of the community, through conduct prompted by universal brotherly love and possible manifestation of supremacy over the world and independence of the same, display in themselves the successful issue of Christ's peculiar work.

But, what is the relationship between the initiator of this exemplary behaviour and the members of the community who may experience "this same Lordship in themselves?" As the historical Founder of the community, we are assured that Christ is necessarily unique in His own order. While others may approximate His world-conquering patience, these would stand in historical dependence on Him. While those who succeed Him in the realisation of the Kingdom of God, the fact that this end is the self-end of God has for Him quite a different meaning.

For the members of Christ's community come to take this attitude as those who have had within them originally, another bond of will; whereas, the figure of Christ cannot be understood at all unless it is His original and distinguishing characteristic, that He find his own personal end in the self-end of God. If Christ is thus the personal revelation of the Will of God as essentially love, then certainly, from the point of view of degree, the love of God finds its perfect revelation in the fact that the members of the Kingdom of God fulfill the law of brotherly love; but from the point of view of kind, these manifestations of brotherly love in their widest sense must be regarded as the intended result of the Divine Lordship introduced through Christ in grace and truth and spritual freedom over the world.^{72.}

The "world conquering will" of the Christ and not the speculations concerning the essential nature of Christ, is, according to Ritschl, His true essence. "If Christ is to be judged by categories that are applied to no other object than Himself, then He is rendered unintelligible."^{73.} It is worth, then, of his human achievements wrought

72. Ibid., p.466.

73. Ibid., p.468.

for our salvation which mark Him as the God-man. His patience under suffering, His universal love and his faithfulness to his vocation to establish the universal ethical fellowship of mankind which is God's end, denote the characteristics of His Godhead. These are, as we have learned from Ritschl's Christology, to be inferred from the portraits of the New Testament Christ and from His life lived in history.

We have sketched Ritschl's Christology and given some attention to the various facets of his system which are presupposed in his Christology, e.g. theory of knowledge, doctrine of the Kingdom of God, value-judgments, with the intention of elucidating his thinking on the historical Jesus and His place in the Ritschlian theology. It is from the records of the earthly Jesus that we are to learn of Him, and moreover, it is only through the Christ of the records that God is to be apprehended. Apart from these reports, God cannot be known. In one stroke, this is to exclude what Tillich has called "the History of Revelation". That is to say, in Ritschl's exclusive emphasis on the historical Jesus as the

only source of the Revelation of God, he has divorced the event of Christ from events and thought patterns which preceded the "event". And, if this is not enough, Ritschl has further severed the New Testament Jesus from the Jesus who was confessed to be the Christ since the New Testament age. In a word, Ritschl's Christ is "bottled up" in the New Testament. How does Ritschl's exclusive emphasis on the New Testament Jesus, or his "Christocentrism" affect his view of history and his conception of the work of the Holy Spirit?

Before we may feel free to comment on this ambivalence in Ritschl's system, we should turn our attention to his understanding of the priestly work of the Christ. The ethical view in the light of his vocation has, we are informed, followed essentially the point of view expressed in the "Kingly Prophethood of Christ."⁷⁴ The ethical view found its appropriate sequence in the religious estimate of His life as the revelation of the love of God, and of that freedom which, as the characteristic power over the world, is the mark of Godhead. But, how does the ethical

74. Ibid., p.472.

view of the priestly character which has been claimed for the life and suffering of Christ resolve itself in the religious point of view?

As Priest, if Christ is to be thought of in this way, the character of His priestly activity is contained in each moment of His unique consciousness, that as the Son of God He stands to God as Father in a relation of incomparable fellowship, which is realised in his Knowledge of God, in the surrender of His will to God's providential guiding, and in the security of feeling which accompanies the same.⁷⁵ But, Christ is, first of all, according to Ritschl, a Priest in His own behalf.. "He is the subject of that true and perfect religion, compared with which no other has been able to bring men to the desired goal of nearness to God. For, since Christ was the first to possess complete and exhaustive knowledge of God, He is, therefore, also the first who was qualified in the true and final manner to exercise that fellowship with God which is the aim of every religion, and to experience in Himself in its fullness there, reciprocal and saving influence of God."⁷⁶

75. Ibid., p.476.

76. Ibid., p.475.

But, under what conditions are we to understand that Christ's loyalty to His vocation as a whole, and, more especially, His willingness to endure death as a consequence of that loyalty, have the significance of priestly service for others?

The traditional interpretations, concentrating on Christ's meritorious sacrifice and the propitiation of an angry God on the behalf of the punishment due man for his inherited guilt, are, according to Ritschl, untenable. "Just as the assured conception of original sin obscures the particular guilt of individual men, so the penal satisfaction offered by Christ is made the equivalent of the eternal damnation due to all mankind, and is by no means fitted to counteract the sense of guilt of each separate individual."⁷⁷.

Commenting of these inadequate atonement theories, Ritschl explains his problem. "If the individual sense of guilt is to be met by the thought of the penal satisfaction offered by Christ, then nothing is left us but the hypothesis that Christ in His sufferings had a distinct and separate experience of the amount of punishment due to each separate individual of all mankind. The impossibility of this supposition is at once apparent, for there is as little evidence in the

77. Ibid., p.480.

history of Christ's life, as there is room within the range of His human consciousness for an omniscience of this kind; so that we have here a conclusive reason against the interpretation of Christ's sufferings as the conscious experience by Him of the punishment due to all mankind."⁷⁸.

But, if Ritschl rejects the depravity of man which he assumes the meritorious sacrifice to be a further implication, what is the mediatorial position of the Founder of the community of Universal Love? Jesus, we are told, in His exercise of Lordship over the world through willing acceptance and patient appropriation of suffering, realised directly in His own person that eternal life which is opposed to the changes of material things. We may become a part of this community...by "attachment to His person, and by appropriation of his aim."⁷⁹.

We possess eternal life and gain Christ's attitude to the world by, it would appear, imitating Jesus. The principle enunciated by Jesus, and which He was the first to realise, i.e. spiritual freedom of the individual and the revelation in his suffering and obedience of the universal final end of the world,

78. Ibid., p.482.

79. Ibid., p.504.

constitute the priestly, ethico-religious significance of Christianity. Ritschl comments on the task of each individual Christian in the matter of receiving the mediating function of the Christ in the following manner: "By directing our wills to God as the unchangeable Father (from whom comes every good and nothing but good (James 1:17), who, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, claims our firm trust unbroken by any wavering of aim (1.5, 11.1), we raise ourselves above the world. For the elevation of soul, in which the Christian glories even in his lowliness, i.e. in the midst of persecution, marks him off from the real lowliness of the man who is rich in the world, who passes away like grass before the scorching wind (1.9-11). Faith, moreover, which is immovable and firm, and includes in itself a treasury of riches, i.e. a peculiar amplitude of power, raises itself above the traditional conditions of worldly society, the precedence of the rich over the poor (11.1-5)."⁸⁰ This steadfast, unchanging direction of our wills, is eternal life. What then are we to make of the forgiveness of sins?

"In the place of the complicated condition of

80. Ibid., p.505.

guilt, separation from God and bondage to the world, there is to come its exact opposite, trust in God, not audaciously and arbitrarily and prematurely entertained, but pervaded by reverence toward Him - trust, moreover, which introduced the soul to the promises and task of the Kingdom of God, and thus brings his will to direct itself to God's end, and which, finally, makes the motives which spring from the world subordinate to the Divine final end - then his sin must be forgiven, and his guilt removed."⁸¹. This neat Ritschlian scheme is highlighted by a phrase which appeared above, namely, "we raise ourselves above the world." Moreover, man "brings his will to direct itself to God's end." Such is the optimism and absurdity which Ritschl gave voice to in his ethico-religious theory of the work of the Christ.

Our discussion of some of the Ritschlian motives has prepared a sufficient base for his interpretation of history. As we pointed out earlier, Ritschl does not address himself, at least specifically, to the problem of history. He assumes that his readers were not asking of his understanding of history and historical events. As we move into

81. Ibid., p.529.

this aspect of our essay, we shall expect to deduce many of our interpretations of Ritschl's "interpretation" from his theological system as we have chosen to present selective sections from his major work, "Justification and Reconciliation",

5. Ritschl's Interpretation of History:

Ritschl has emphasised the importance of the historical and especially the supremacy of the history associated with Jesus Christ, but he has not examined his terminology or subjected his view of 'history' in the way he attempts to distinguish his theory of knowledge from other theories utilised by theologians. In the heat of controversy, and in the violence which characterised his reaction to speculative and dogmatic theology, much of the necessary semantic clarity and scrutiny of ideas is missing in his theology. In view of Ritschl's total system, or the parts which we have surveyed, we shall be forced to imply his interpretation of the historical.

In the first place, his theory of knowledge implies an emphasis on the phenomenal over the metaphysical, of the particular operations of God

through His effects over the general, unrevealed, unveiled character of God. Utilising the inductive method which deals with established facts, Ritschl determines the objects and limits of religious knowledge. The value-judgments of religion indicate the worth of religious knowledge. While these judgments constitute the subjective form of knowledge, Ritschl did not intend that apprehension, appreciation and appropriation of religious truth should minimise its objective content. Historical facts, comprising this revelation, recorded in scripture and experienced by the first community, exist actually and really, quite independent of the wishes and hopes of the individual believer. Value-judgments appropriate the facts, apprehend and assign personal worth to the particular events recorded in the New Testament. Christianity is, accordingly, a religion which concerns a historical person and a historical community. While some of Ritschl's disciples, particularly Herrmann, connect and co-ordinate the present appropriation or reception of the facts with the initial "event" or "events" in the New Testament, Ritschl does not concern himself with that aspect of the "factual" events. His primary task, as we understand it, was to expound the groundwork of Christianity, i.e. the

New Testament facts.

But, is Ritschl's understanding of the "facts" clear to him? That is to say, is Ritschl certain in his own mind of his interpretation of the New Testament "facts"? Within his theory of knowledge, it is clear, so it would appear from our own understanding and interpretation of his methodology, that the effects of a personality, the deeds and actions, the seen and obvious, constitute the primary knowledge. The real or actual, the thing-in-itself is known and perceived in its effects and predicates. From these empirical data and from these manifestations and operations, we may devise a system of knowledge, or how we know what we know. But, as we have chosen to point out in several instances, clarity of mind was absent on this primary methodology. In one place, in his 3rd volume of "Justification and Reconciliation", Ritschl wants to say that his view of reality differs from the Kantian idea, to the effect that sensibility was the characteristic mode of reality.⁸² Yet, it would appear from his own phenomenalism that sensibility and the appearance of a thing, is the primary

82. Ibid., p.221.

way we know what we know. On the other hand, in his "Theologie und Metaphysic" he brings the appearances into some relationship with the cognising soul that integrates and assigns the appearances into some manageable order.

In view of the ambivalence in Ritschl's system on one of his primary points, i.e. his theory of knowledge, we shall expect vagueness and vacillation in his understanding of the New Testament "facts". In one context, referring to the supremacy of the Christ, Ritschl speaks of the non-objective evidence of this might and power. The power of Christ is..."anything but a fact of objective and palpable experience."⁸³. It is not "palpable or evident" that the Christ exercised supremacy over the world, nor is it plain or "factually" evident that this supremacy is exercised by a believer in the Christ. It is, according to Ritschl, within the sphere of the invisible that we can trace the advancing power of Christ over this world at all. But, does Ritschl's theory of knowledge provide for these views? And, are we doing him an injustice by implying a naive, realistic understanding of facts? On the evidence which we have uncovered in his system, we do not think so. Yet, there is

83. Ibid., p.460.

enough ambivalence in his thinking to cause us to say that Ritschl, while emphasising the supremacy of the "facts" of the historical revelation in Jesus, had a confused interpretation of these facts. For example; He isolates the New Testament history of the redemptive act in Christ from the history of redemption in the Old Testament and the development and understanding of these redemptive events within the New Testament and beyond the Apostolic witness. All history is secular except the history associated with the Christ event. Possibly this natural-supernatural view of history, designating the New Testament history as supernatural - though not in an obvious manner - explains why Ritschl could consider, on the one hand, the palpable objectivity of historical events not associated with the Jesus of history, and on the other, the events connected with Jesus as belonging to a special sphere of their own. In other words, the natural-supernatural, secular-sacred view of history plagued Ritschl's view of the Christian message. While eschewing the traditional ways of appropriating the Christian faith, e.g. through dogmas and alien theories of knowledge, Ritschl's theology is, with some exceptions,

guiltily of the same error which he associates with the traditionalists, though his error has taken on a different guise. In his system, the historical in the New Testament, despite his reminder that "faith does not consist in abstract knowledge, or knowledge which deals with merely historical facts,"⁸⁴ is the source of faith. The historical "facts" in the New Testament are, it would seem, in a realm of their own - free from criticism or investigation. It would also appear that the historic Jesus which Ritschl elevates from the background in the Old Testament and from world history before and since the first century, is an abstraction. This Jesus of Ritschl's portrait is abstract no less surely than the metaphysics of the Athanasian Creed or than the Hegelian "Divine Humanity".

It remained for one of his followers, Wilhelm Herrmann, to move beyond Ritschl's error. Herrmann, as we shall see in our next chapter, was concerned with the freedom of the Christian from dogmas and the probabilities of historical events narrated in the New Testament. Herrmann was intent on describing another side of the

84. Ibid., p.212.

Christian message, i.e., the present historical appearance of the Christ in the sphere where we live. The Christian faith did not rest on a scientific certainty that the New Testament events occurred in the way they are described; on the contrary, faith had its root in the present appropriation of the historical Christ as He appears today.

These men are searching for a solution to the dilemma which their theory of knowledge has placed them in. On the one hand, the objectivity of the events, the eventfulness of the happenings must be safeguarded, and, on the other hand, the worthship, quality and significance of these happenings must be declared. The objectivity of the event guards against the subjectivism of Schleiermacherian theology and the mysticism of speculative philosophical theology. The value-judgment of faith assigns the objective event its worth, but the event is actual and real. The actuality and realness of the "events" associated with the Christ, as these events were related to Ritschl's theory of knowledge, created a conflict, it would appear, in Ritschl's own mind.

It is this conflict between the objectivity and subjectivity of the event, its past relevance and present significance, which carries us a step away from the master to one of his finest disciples, Wilhelm Herrmann.

Herrmann's most important work, "The Command of the Christian with God," is a profound interpretation of the Gospel, which he conceived as being the interpretation of the Christian Gospel, but of which the essence is not lost. The essence of the Gospel is the Gospel of Jesus, which is the essence of the Gospel in the whole of the world. Through this work, Herrmann has shown that the Gospel is not a mere historical event, but a living reality which is still present in the world today. He has shown that the Gospel is not a mere historical event, but a living reality which is still present in the world today.

L. Herrmann, Wilhelm, "The Command of the Christian with God" - p. 11

CHAPTER III.

THE THEOLOGY OF WILHELM HERRMANN.1. Introduction.

We turn to the theology of Wilhelm Herrmann for an interpretation of history and the historical Jesus which we are warranted in saying lies implicit in the thought of Ritschl. Herrmann, as we shall soon discover, devoted attention to the problem of the historical Jesus, while Ritschl took for granted that his point of view was understood. There is, as we shall soon see, some attention given to the ambiguity which we noted in Ritschl's view, i.e. concerning the true basis of faith in the historical Jesus. While Ritschl's thought is clarified and advanced in Herrmann's writings, he left us with another glaring ambiguity which proves rather disturbing.

Herrmann's most important treatise, "The Communion of the Christian with God", elaborates his interpretation of the 'Gospel facts.' He is concerned to refute two interpretations of the Christian Gospel, both of which he considers to be legal in nature. The first, on the left wing of the Gospel of Jesus, centre their knowledge of Jesus in the rule of doctrine. Through accepting certain doctrines about Jesus.. "they wish to become or reckon that they are Christians."¹. This interpretation bases their Christianity on general ideas and

1. Herrmann, Wilhelm, "The Communion of the Christian with God" - p.7.

eternal truths which must be acknowledged. The right wing of the Gospel of Jesus, according to Herrmann's description,.. "count it part of their glory that with them the sum of doctrine is much more comprehensive, and embraces at the least all that is reported or taught about Jesus in the New Testament."² This point of view in its legalistic character seeks to map out the way all must go before they can become Christians. Herrmann brings two objections against his opponents who consider assent to an extract of biblical doctrine to be the way to Truth. First of all, this demand is morally impossible, and, secondly, a convenient substitution for what is really necessary. It is Herrmann's central idea, stated by him in this context, that he uses to refute these positions in his book. He writes: "One who comes under the grasp of the spiritual character of Jesus wins a right appreciation of the doctrines about the Person of Jesus, so that he can find in even them that one thing great and precious to him above all else in the world, the power of this personal spirit over men who are yearning to become conscious of God..For he now sees in their essential characteristics, (the doctrines), the expression of what he himself has experienced. And the rest of what is there he puts calmly aside until

2. Ibid., p.8.

it shall please God that it too shall appear as originating in him."³.

Placing himself decisively against the concept of "facts which demand faith," when by these facts are meant the miracles reported in the Holy Scriptures, or, indeed, anything that is an event of the past and not something that can be experienced here and now, Herrmann proceeds to..."set forth and expound the communion of the Christian with God which is mediated through Jesus Christ."⁴.

This is, according to him, the first business of theology. It is the task of historical science to state New Testament doctrines. The theologian's task is not fixity of doctrine, but his business is.. "to open men's eyes and lead them to see that nothing can be revelation to them except what actually lifts them into communion with God."⁵.

From within the standpoint of faith, Herrmann describes the inner life of faith and the understanding which faith places on the objects of faith. While Roman Catholic and Protestant Orthodoxy believed their great task to be the systematising of the thoughts of the classic witnesses to Christianity, Herrmann is intent on going further than this. "We desire," he writes, "to show how those thoughts arise in the course of communion with

3. Ibid., p.3-4.

4. Ibid., p.4.

5. Ibid., p.39.

God in the Christian soul that has been set free to enter into this enterprise. Thus we exhibit these thoughts, not as something handed down by tradition, but as something in vital growth at the present moment, as, in short, thoughts of faith."⁶ The processes within the soul by which the individual appropriates salvation are not to be understood as a human accomplishment, a work which unredeemed man is obliged to do before he communes with God. These thoughts are initiated when, according to Herrmann, we are transplanted into that inner condition of mind in which such thoughts begin to be generated in ourselves, and this happens only when God lifts us into communion with Himself. After this experience, the Bible is seen as a means of the revelation of the grace and of the judgment of God.

Unlike the theologians who concern themselves with doctrinal formulations, Herrmann sees his exposition as concerned with the connection of the religious life with the objective reality which we find around us. The inner life of faith, and the foundation of this life in the personal life of Jesus on the basis of Luther's insights, though Herrmann chooses to depart from Luther at several critical points, is Herrmann's essential concern.

6. Ibid., p.40-41.

Our enquiry is concerned with what Herrmann calls the fact of Jesus' appearance in history; which fact is within the realm of history to which we ourselves belong. In our circumstances, according to Herrmann, we encounter this fact of the Man Jesus as an undoubted reality. This interpretation of Jesus' presence in our history raises many questions - questions which we will want to illuminate in our exposition. Does Herrmann justify his use of "fact" in connection with the appearances of the person of Jesus to us in our present history? Is the "fact" on a same level with the other "facts" of history? That is to say, can the personal life of Jesus be grasped only by those within the fellowship through faith and in faith, or can it be grasped as a real fact of history by a man who has no faith? What significance is to be attached to historical criticism of the narratives? Do the probabilities of history jeopardise the foundation of faith?

In our exposition we shall follow the reasoning of Herrmann, even to the point of quoting and paraphrasing his arguments. This method is aimed, first, at setting forth his own thoughts and, secondly, at showing the ambiguity of his thinking on two issues which concern us in our inquiry -

namely, the "fact" of the personal life of Jesus in the realm in which we live, and the past "fact" of Jesus' appearance in the first century. The latter problem involves a discussion of the significance of the "fact", or the significance which we should place on the "facts" of the faith and the ways in which the "facts" become real to us in the "place where we stand in history." We turn now to the "fact" of Jesus' appearing in the first century and the bearing of that fact on faith.

2. The "fact" of Jesus.

Jesus Christ is "that fact which can make us certain, as no other fact can, that God communes with us."⁷ But, the Orthodox theologians, finding their support for certainty in doctrines concerning God and Christ which are vouched for by others, and Rationalists who have their authority in an inner peace founded upon eternal truths which they grasp in and through their reason, will consider, according to Herrmann, the proposition an exaggeration. Besides considering the communion of God with us an inward experience into which external facts do not intrude, these two interpretations bring two objections to bear on the proposition. First,

7. Ibid., p.65.

that the person of Jesus is a fact vouched for by authorities and, secondly, that it is a fact of the past. The second objection forbids us to say that, strictly speaking, Jesus Himself is an element of the reality in which we stand. The proponents of this view hold that such can be said only of the tradition concerning Jesus. The second objection to Herrmann's proposition also forbids us to say that God communes with us by this fact, i.e. the Person of Jesus, because this fact is a thing of the past, whereas God's communion with us must be a thing of the present. The first objection to the proposition is concerned with the tradition of Jesus, which tradition is mediated by others and supremely in the New Testament. How can Jesus be an undeniable element in our environment, if we are dependent on the story of Jesus, or picture of Jesus, given by others? By examining these two objections, we may, according to Herrmann, arrive at some interpretation of history which reaches beyond the errors in traditionalism and rationalism.

First of all, Herrmann continues, the tradition mirrors what others have experienced in their history. Yet, while incorporating the facts into our picture, we must appropriate the content of

these facts, that is to say, the interpretations placed upon the facts. We may do this in a more elementary fashion by trusting the narratives of the events. But, in religious faith, especially in matters which concern the vital interests of religion, "a believer cannot base his very existence entirely on what may be given him by other men."⁸ The Roman Church, when it accepts the appearance of Jesus on the authority of the narratives, transforms the Person of Jesus into a symbol or stimulus to the imagination. This religious interpretation of the Person of Jesus places the Jesus of history to one side as soon as the deepest religious interest comes forward for consideration. But, according to Herrmann, this is not the correct appropriation of the contents of the narratives. We must bring to bear on the stories a historical principle of appropriation, namely by combining with the narrative something which the tools of historical criticism supplies. These tools enable us to consider the circumstances which influenced the narrator and they further equip us with some means of assessing the probability of the contents of the narratives, and, hence, how to decide now which of the contents may be incorporated into

8. Ibid., p.69.

our picture of what actually happened. On the basis of these probable factors, viz. literary documents, philological considerations and archaeological findings, modifications may take place. "It is obvious," Herrmann continues, "that such decisions from the standpoint of the mere (secular) historian we may ascertain the fact that Jesus lived from the fact of the existence of His church and its historical significance. Even as a mere historian, we may discern the correctness of certain features in that portrait of Jesus which His followers preserved in the records of the New Testament."⁹ While as historians we may explain away some of the interpretative features as due to embellishments, exaggerations, and the transfiguring enthusiasm of his disciples, we cannot commit ourselves to the absurd supposition that all traces of Jesus' earthly life have disappeared.

But, if much is established on grounds of probability..."we do all include His picture with its well-known features as a part of the historical reality amid which we live, and here we are evidently in no way dependent upon the

9. Ibid., p.70.

authority of the chroniclers who give us those features of the life of Jesus. On the contrary, the decision which we reach that these things are facts, proceeds from our own independent activity, and is based upon that which we regard as real at present, exactly as the decisions of historical criticism are. It is thus perfectly clear that we are quite in a position to detach the content of a narrative both from the narrative itself and from its author, and to regard it as an element of the reality to which we have to adjust our lives."¹⁰.

But, if historical probability and historical investigation of the factual origins of the faith, favourable or unfavourable, cannot decide for or against the basis of the faith, or if the faith cannot be formed or destroyed by historical judgment, the questions arise: Upon what grounds does the certainty rest? Upon what basis or levels is the picture of Jesus mediated?

Herrmann answers our questions in the following manner:..."If we have that picture at all, we have it as the result, not of our own efforts, but of the power of Jesus Himself."¹¹. Elaborating this answer, he lays an emphasis on the Christian fellowship which has been the recipient of the 'inner life of Jesus.' Within this fellowship,

10. Ibid., p.71.

11. Ibid., p.72.

through contact with the testimony of others who have been 'impressed' by Jesus, the power of Jesus and the remembrance of His saving activity, and the continual working of this activity, are communicated. "If we would understand what is most important in history," Herrmann believes, "we must look not only to the records, but also to the men whose actual present life expounds those records to us."¹².

But, does not this mediation of the 'inner life' of Jesus through others take the place of the story or the records of the probable facts? Herrmann thinks not, for, according to him... "He who has found the inner life of Jesus through the mediation of others, in so far as he has really found it, has become free even of that mediation."¹³. "Within our own sphere of reality," Jesus reveals His inner life to us. In this free revelation, initially detected in the New Testament records and in the testimony of others within the fellowship, the touch of the living one, to use Herrmann's phraseology, becomes for us real and present. Whoever has come to see the Person of Jesus under the impress of that inner life that breaks through all the veils of the story, will ask no more questions

12. Ibid., p.73.

13. Ibid., p.74.

as to the trustworthiness of the Evangelists. It is not to be thought that this impression of the inner life depends upon what we make of the story. On the contrary, it is what the contents of the story make of us. The prerequisite is not scientific accuracy or factual correctness. The condition on our part lies in our yearning after a fullness for our own life. This yearning can perceive the strength and fullness of that soul of Jesus which meets us in the story, underneath the contradictions and imperfections discernible by historical criticism. The personality of Jesus, His own inner life shines through these disfigurements. Within this framework, Herrmann says that historical criticism of the New Testament writings may have full play. Criticism constantly changes and yet the basis of our faith is something fixed.¹⁴ This faith is born out of a moral experience - an experience in which the personal spirit, vis a vis the inner life of Jesus, wins power over us. The Christian faith is safe from the findings of historical criticism. "So far as establishing our faith is concerned, historical work on the New Testament can bring us no nearer, and neither by this nor by any other means can we compel any other men to recognise

14. Ibid., p.76.

even the bare reality of that which has an effect upon ourselves so powerful as to give us courage to believe on God."¹⁵ It is, in summary, the certainty which the Person of Jesus establishes in us which is superior to every doubt and incomparably safe from historical criticism.

But does this mean that historical criticism is valueless, or, because our certainty lies on another level, a science to be excluded? Herrmann thinks not. He outlines two contributions of historical criticism. Firstly, historical criticism disposes of the all too common notion that the narratives in themselves serve as reliable bases for faith. No scientific process can determine what the Person of Jesus should signify for the Christian. This may be termed the critical function of historical study. Secondly, historical criticism has a constructive function. In the various researches carried out on the documents, the Christian believer is called upon, to use Herrmann's expression, "to compose afresh that portrait of Jesus which he carries within him as absolute truth, with the relative truth obtained by historical research. And this helps us not to forget that the most important fact in our life

15. Ibid., p.76.

cannot be given to us once for all, but must be continually laid hold of afresh with all our soul."¹⁶. Historical study cannot give us the revelation of the personal life of Jesus - this is always a miraculous revelation - but neither can it over take this from us by any of its discoveries.

But, having spoken of the external happenings received and interpreted in the records, the extreme probability of some of the events, and the place and limit of historical study, it may be asked, "by what means then do we attain certainty? Or, how do we receive the historical Jesus in our own experience? What is the meaning of some of the terminology which Hermann employs, particularly the apprehension of the event "in our own sphere of reality?" What is to be understood by the statement, "It is only out of life in history that God can come to meet us. In proportion as what is essential in our historical environment becomes an element of our consciousness, we are led into the presence of those facts which can reveal God to us. If our souls do not awake to a clear consciousness of these facts, if we simply endure our relationship to other men, instead of living it, then the personality within us to which

16. Ibid., p.77.

God desires to reveal Himself remains dormant, and we do not see the facts through which alone God can reveal Himself to us." 17.

If no-one is awakened to true religion through allowing himself to be persuaded that religion in the heart must begin with an absolutely unhesitating confidence in narrators, and if only a saving faith is known as one is inwardly transformed through "God's working upon himself where he stands", what are the implications of such an experience? This Jesus, Herrmann contends, "stands before us, as an undeniable part of what is real to ourselves." It is not the historical, external facts which are to be absolutely believed; it is not doctrines and narratives which are presented to man as the main thing in which he must believe in order to find the Redeemer. If this be the case, assent must be a "work" performed by man. These are merely New Testament witnesses to Jesus, not ideas which are demanded or laws to be assented to. It is when the Person of Jesus touches us as a fact that is real to ourselves that the Gospel is heard. Only when it pleases God to reveal His Son in us can we know the fact of Jesus. This happens, so we are informed, when our minds, intent on examining our moral judgment and

17. Ibid., p.65.

satisfying our religious need, come in contact with the biblical tradition regarding Jesus.

Before we can illumine how Herrmann thinks this 'inner life of Jesus' meets us in history, in the place where we are standing, we should point out the features of the portrait of Jesus which Herrmann isolates for special consideration. They are, to a large degree, the features which Ritschl had emphasised. (1) The conflict into which Jesus comes with pious Judaism and His consequent rising above these nationalistic claims and aspirations.

"The Christ of the New Testament shows a firmness of religious conviction, a clearness of moral judgment, and a purity and strength of will, such as are combined in no other figure in history."¹⁸.

(2) The faithfulness which Jesus maintained over against the opposition of this world and, in his death, the perfect love and trust in God which he exemplified, sets him aside as man's "never-equalled prototype."¹⁹. The incomparable moral strength of Jesus and His perfect love and deepest understanding of duty, marks Jesus out as unique and final in the history of mankind. Through these qualities, "He has thus become an integral part of all that is real to ourselves; and He

18. Ibid., p.85.

19. Ibid., p.88.

fills with light all the world in which we stand."²⁰
 He is not only the clearest ideal for man, but,
 He.."as the Messiah, claimed not merely to set men
 a task, but to give to them God's perfect gift."²¹
 Unlike the Buddha and Plato, Jesus does not point
 men to His teaching but to Himself, His own Person.

It is not looking to the benefits derived from
 His Person and to formulae devised by the Church
 Councils that we know Jesus in all His redemptive
 force. In our history, standing before us, it is
 the Person of Jesus that we are directed to - not,
 however, the "mysterious redemptive forces which
 are to proceed from Christ, and which for that
 reason are not Christ Himself."²² In Jesus'
 perfect submission to the sovereignty of God,
 understood as the Kingdom of God, He stands
 before us...The truth of His claims may be tested
 by every one who has at all learned to see the
 Person, the human soul of Jesus."²³

The awakening of the consciousness of a living
 God through the impression Jesus makes upon us, is
 "a present fact in our own life...The existence of
 Jesus in this world of ours is the fact in which
 God so touches us as to come into a communion

20. Ibid., p.92.

21. Ibid., p.92.

22. Ibid., p.94.

23. Ibid., p.97.

with us that can endure."²⁴. Though there be a gulf between Jesus and ourselves, it is only through communion with Him that we recognise the God of Jesus Christ to be our God. Through an apprehension of the good amidst the inward strifes and confusions in our spirit, we "come to understand the fact that Jesus belongs to this world of ours."²⁵. While "our moral striving seems to exhaust itself in vain attempts, yet we have still the consolation that we stand in and belong to a historical movement in which the good wields ever greater sway, for Christ's work must reach its goal, and we know through God's communion with us that we are assisting in that work."²⁶.

The communion with God of Christians rests, according to Herrmann, "on two objective facts, the first of which is the historical fact of the Person of Jesus. The second objective ground of the Christian consciousness, that God communes with him, is that we hear within ourselves the demand of the moral law."²⁷. The first fact, Herrmann contends, is not a past event; on the contrary, it is a fact, an element in our own sphere of reality. The second ground of objectivity concerns the hearing within ourselves the demand of the moral law. In the Person of Jesus and His power over us, "The

24. Ibid., p.98.

25. Ibid., p.100.

26. Ibid., p.101.

27. Ibid., p.102.

moral conviction that rules our inmost soul acquires the form of a personal life."²⁸ Life in personal fellowship implies moral obligations as the eternal conditions of life on earth. In Jesus, these moral conditions are particularised - the unconditional demands are concretised in a historical life. These are not subjective assertions; for these two facts, the appearance of the historical Jesus and the witness of conscience, force themselves upon us as undeniable elements in the reality in which we stand. It is subjectivism, according to Herrmann, when the Christian appropriates as contents of faith any conception which does not arise out of the fact that God comes into communion with us. This subjectivity is involved in a false attachment to creeds. While dressed in ecclesiastical garb, these arbitrary adaptations of traditional formulae, apart from the objective reality of the personal life of Jesus, can be devastating and disastrous for faith. The capricious assent to doctrinal formulations is not of the same order as the vision of the personal life of Jesus which is exercised most forcibly in the sphere of conscience. This present power of the inner life of Jesus

28. Ibid., p.103.

is the basis and vital principle of true religion, and the vision of the personal life of Jesus is mediated through the preaching of the Gospel and in the practical Christian life. Moreover, the vision of the inner life of Jesus, or the knowledge derived there from, is inseparable from faith. This vision is given within the community - within the community which has remembered the life of, and the testimony to, Jesus.

Continuing his discussion of the inner processes of the Christian religion, Herrmann poses the question: "Whether God manifests Himself as a real power working upon us, so that we are conscious of it just as anything else in this world?"²⁹ It is not in Jesus' teaching or as a compendium of doctrines and information concerning God and Christ which mirror the power and presence of God. We have that power, according to Herrmann, "through Jesus only when we apprehend His personal life to be new and for us a present part of the real world, and powerful enough to compel us to see God as a real power."³⁰ Yet, can we be certain of the features of the inner life of Jesus through historical science? Can this science assure us that what the story offers

29. Ibid., p.112.

30. Ibid., p.112-113.

us is an actual part of the history to which we belong? Herrmann thinks not, and if historical doubt is to be assuaged it must be through "looking to the contents of what we learn to know as the inner life of Jesus."³¹ The witness of the disciples to the Jesus which impressed Himself on their lives is the central source of the picture, and not the science whose business it is to find out what can be proved to be real. If, Hermann contends, we decide to bow ourselves before this personal life, we may not wish for an exact historical account of the personality which we cannot comprehend in its actuality. This portrait of the inner life of Jesus cannot be drawn adequately by anyone, nor are we to depend for our picture of Jesus on any doctrinal or scriptural formulation. "Each man can win this portrait for himself only when he sees that in all that touches his inner life, there is nothing more important than the tradition regarding Jesus and the traces of His power that meet him in his own immediate environment."³² ... "God comes into communion with us in the very event which makes us certain of Him."³³

31. Ibid., p.113.

32. Ibid., p.114.

33. Ibid., p.116.

Through childhood, this inner life of Jesus is impressed upon us by the home and the fellowship of believers, but, as we take moral responsibilities, we yearn for a more decisive proof of the presence of God. Turned to moral freedom, we long, according to Herrmann, for a fuller realisation of the faith which once we professed as children on the strength of testimony. In these maturing years, various concerns are opened for us. We can accept Christian doctrines on the testimony of others; we can abandon our training; separate moral ideas from their religious context; or we might be open for the fuller revelation of the character of God seen through and in the sublime and pure life of Jesus. Through the strength of Jesus' inner life, He makes clear to us both our moral powerlessness and the reality of God. When this experience - the apprehension of Jesus' inner life frees us from the world and awakes our moral self-consciousness - occurs..."the world wherein this has befallen us is no longer to our eyes a weary stretch of numberless and perplexing events."³⁴ This experience destroys self-confidence, creates trust in God, and makes the person a new creature.

34. Ibid., p.123.

The reality of this Man in history, touches man as the redeeming action of the Personal God upon man's own soul. This fact has become a part of a man's own life. It differs from assent to mere doctrine or confidence in the events narrated in the text. In the human life of Jesus, the personal God turns toward those who are overpowered by Jesus' spiritual and moral force.

Concerning the Deity of Christ, Hermann approves of Luther's essential treatment of the doctrine. We are first to be touched by the Man Jesus before we arrive at a conception of His Divinity. "We must begin from below, and after that come upwards."³⁵ If we approach Jesus with the presupposition that He is the Son of God - the practice which Luther called the method of the worldly-wise - this is beginning from above to build the roof before they have laid the foundation. For Luther and Herrmann it is the apprehension of Christ first as man, and only afterwards as God. "The Man Christ to whom we cling will Himself bring it about that He shall appear to us as God."³⁶ It is not by first affirming that in Jesus the Divine substance was united with Human nature. The certainty of the Christian does not reside in some mysterious

35. Ibid., p.165.

36. Ibid., p.168.

divine substance, but in a "living power, acting upon him, overwhelming him and announcing the will of the Personal God. In Jesus, as his historical work shows Him to us, we have before us the inmost will of God, to which everything is subject, and we experience it to be a power construing and emancipating our souls."³⁷ Herrmann gives us a valid insight into his reasoning on the subject of Christ's Divinity when he writes: "The question whether we are right in speaking of the Deity of Christ when we find God turning towards us in the disclosure of Jesus' personal life, must be decided according as we conceive God to be in His nature a substance on the one hand, or, on the other hand, a personal Spirit who asserts His nature by the energy of a will directing itself towards ends and preserving in itself a certain disposition."³⁸ If the former way is chosen for describing God, then the Deity is spoken of as a divine substance in Christ. If the latter conception is followed, as it is by Herrmann,..."then it is self-evident that the Deity of Christ can only be expressed by saying that the mind and will of the everlasting God encounters us in the historically active will of this man."³⁹ This latter theory, according to

37. Ibid., p.176-177.

38. Ibid., p.177.

39. Ibid., p.178.

Herrmann, is the only one represented in sacred scriptures, and the only one permissible in the Christian community.

The two-nature theory, Herrmann contends, is a scientific invention. It attempts to describe the unity of Christ and God, which we experience in our faith, in terms of a previously established conception of Divine and human nature. We know, on the basis of Herrmann's reconstruction, the Divinity of the Christ through our encounter with the Man Jesus who, by his Personal Spirit, compels us to think of Him as the Lord who holds in his grasp both ourselves and that infinite realm by which our life is conditioned.⁴⁰ Through the phenomena of the inner life of Jesus, we arrive at the result, i.e. Christ's Divinity, which result is not set as a condition, as in the orthodox view, but is a consequent affirmation of faith.

But, is not the historical Christ a fulfilment centuries ago in order that ever afterwards men may become Christians? Herrmann quotes Luther on the point: "To me it is not simply an old song of an event that happened fifteen hundred years ago; it is something more than an event

40.. Ibid., p.180.

that happened once - for it is a gift and bestowing that endures for ever."⁴¹ It is not some general knowledge separable from the historical deed of redemption. The deed is historical (as a past event) and yet present in that the individual soul is touched and caused to come to it through the continual working of God in the Man Jesus. In one's present environment, through the preaching of the Gospel, every Christian has or can have this redeeming experience.

The community, because it is the place where alone the historical event is remembered and perpetuated, is the central place where the creator and redeemer are met.⁴² The Church.... "becomes to us on this earth an element in that divine act by which we know that, in the midst of this world, we have been set within the Kingdom of God."⁴³ In Christian preaching which gives an expression to our particular conditions, and through the Christian life lived in communion and fellowship with believers, the personal life of Jesus becomes a reality in the world, "standing before our eyes."⁴⁴ The Church on this reckoning is not conceived of as a place containing certain mysterious redemptive powers which are to save us when we submit to their operation.

41. Ibid., p.186.

42. Ibid., p.190.

43. Ibid., p.190-191.

44. Ibid., p.191.

But, if the Church is conceived as a fellowship - a place where the divine act of revelation, i.e. the Christ of History, the historical, present, redemptive action of God in Christ - may become an element in our present life," all the events we pass through begin to utter the speech of God."⁴⁵.

Is faith assent to historical facts, narrative material or doctrinal formulations? Is it a work required, a theoretical activity which bases belief on certain formulae? Should there be assensus before fiducia in order that faith may exist? Indeed not! The burden of Herrmann's argument has been to show that faith is a confidence awakened in human hearts by God's revelation, not assent given to doctrines to which a man must bring himself, and for which he is to be rewarded by forgiveness. Faith is thus really a confidence in an event which has taken place in the Christian's own life. It is not based on the credibility of a report or the truth of a doctrine.. The portrait of Christ in the New Testament and the picture which is drawn for us by participating in the Christian fellowship do not rest on conclusions, favourable or unfavourable, reached by historical

45. Ibid., p.194.

science. If faith is to be understood as not a human work, then faith is free from the historical uncertainties uncovered by the scientist. It is the significance which the story has gained for our life. "It is only when the Christian has taken this story to heart as an unquestionable fact in his own life that all that testifies to the historical reality of Jesus shines out before him and is clearly and easily grasped."⁴⁶ Herrmann summarises the two-fold nature of faith in the following manner: "...first, faith is trust in an event which moves us so that we interpret it to mean that God is seeking to admit us to His favour by this event; and, secondly, for us this event is first and foremost the fact that we are brought under the influence of the Christian brotherhood, its life and teaching."⁴⁷

Addressing himself to the further argument propounded by his opponents to the effect that faith involves the acceptance of the features of the historical Jesus, e.g. miracles, etc., Herrmann writes: "For if the inner life of the Christian reaches such seriousness and depth that faith on the one hand, and the acceptance of these narratives as true on the other, are seen to be quite distinct things, then even the faith which

46. Ibid., p.226.

47. Ibid., p.227.

God awakens in the breasts is contaminated and made impure by impotent human efforts. As soon as acceptance of those narratives as true is honoured as the most important element, or beginning, of faith, then at once there will also appear the injurious consequences of founding faith thus on human endeavour. A faith in which there lurks an element so utterly different from confidence in God is not felt to be a work of God, however strongly it be asserted that He brings it about."⁴⁸ If the miracles in the narrative and the resurrection of Jesus are the presuppositions of faith, "we should have to redeem ourselves by our own resolve...No miracle of which others tell us has of itself the power to influence us so that it shall appear unquestionably real in our eyes. For us everything depends on this, that something shall come before us which has not first to be made a fact by our desiring to believe it, but which simply is a fact...The traditional record may appear doubtful; but the essential content of that record, namely, the inner life of Jesus, has the power to manifest itself to the conscience as an undeniable fact. That means everything."⁴⁹

48. Ibid., p.234.

49. Ibid., p.235-236.

We have hesitated to bring the two points which concern us in Herrmann's exposition into critical focus. These considerations are: (1) The influences of the historical Christ in the first century which initiated the communion with God, and (2) the living God which is to be experienced as a 'fact', i.e., in the personal life of Jesus, in the "realm where we live." This may seem like an arbitrary decision - one which is unwarranted in view of Herrmann's efforts to relate the historical Jesus in the first century with the historical Jesus as he appears to us in our century; but, if this distinction seems unjustifiable, one must be referred to Herrmann's distinction between the personal life of Jesus and the exalted Christ. The former "can be," he says, "grasped as real fact in history by a man who has no faith, or even after the power of faith has been extinguished in such a man."⁵⁰ While the latter in all that it implies, i.e. resurrection and glorification, is grasped "only when our faith is already fully matured."⁵¹ In this context, and in his wording, Herrmann implies that a grasp of God working in the personal life of Jesus is distinct from God acting in the risen Christ. It is unwarranted, Herrmann further says,

50. Ibid., p.292.

51. Ibid., p.292.

for the believer to fly beyond those limits which are drawn around him in his earthly experience. Within the limits of his experience he may experience God working in the personal life of Jesus, but he cannot know the hiddenness of the risen Christ.

While the above remarks appear to be a digression from the two critical points which concern us, it is well to bear in mind the questionable distinction which Herrmann makes between the Jesus of history and the Risen Christ, or the Christ of Faith. Admittedly, the Christ of faith may be known and apprehended in relationship with the Jesus of history, but the invalid distinction of the two aspects of faith forces the question: What is the nature of the appearance of Jesus in the realm of history where we stand?

In order to explicate our question, first, let us confine ourselves to the ways the personal life of Jesus is known, or to use Herrmann's words, "What are the experiences out of which Christianity may arise?"⁵².

Enough has been said to point to the historical basis of Christianity - within the life a definite people, at a particular time and place in the world, a man was confessed to be the Christ.

52. Herrmann, "Systematic Theology" - p.35.

Herrmann is not concerned to define the historicity of the Christian message. His inquiries in his "Communion of the Christian with God" and in his small book "Systematic Theology", "are directed to the end that we experience the living person of Jesus as supreme in the infinite reality that surrounds us."⁵³ It must be repeated in this context. While we are concerned with Herrmann's ideas on the historical Jesus, in particular the aspects of the life of Jesus which he isolates for special emphasis, our central concern is with the ways in which Christianity becomes an "indubitable Fact" in our own history. We will, in this section, attempt to draw together the ways faith comes to conceive of Jesus Christ as living and present with us.

3. The Mediums of Faith:

(1) We may lay hold of the 'inner life' of Jesus through the tradition which has come down to us in the Christian Brotherhood, In the glory of Jesus' appearance as it stands before us in the Gospels, we see God's approach to us and God's presence with every one of us. In the faith of the first disciples we perceive the "picture of the historical Christ" which He Himself has fixed in the faith created by Him and handed down to us in the

53. Ibid., p. 129.

New Testament."⁵⁴ In the community, the figure of Jesus as history records it, touches us with such power that it draws our confidence to itself as a revelation of God.⁵⁵ Christian faith in its commencement and development is nothing else than trust in persons and in the powers of personal life. In our religious intercourse with Christians and through our reverence for them, we, who have received such a turning to God by the power of the personal life which the Gospels set before us, "see the living naturalness of the historical portrait of Jesus, and the importance of any doubt as to its historical truth."⁵⁶

It is, then, primarily through the picture of the Christ in the New Testament, mediated by the personal love of men who have been grasped by this portrait in their present circumstances, that faith is born and nurtured. Herrmann puts the point in a more categorical vein in his "Systematic Theology". He writes: "The picture of Jesus there given, i.e. New Testament, is for us the means of our salvation...The person of Jesus becomes to us a real power rooted in history, not through the historical proofs, but through the experience produced in us by the picture of His spiritual

54. Herrmann, "Communion with God" - p.282.

55. Ibid., p.228.

56. Ibid., p.229.

life which we find for ourselves in the pages of the New Testament."⁵⁷.

(2) Another mediatory function, complementary to the Brotherhood and the picture of the Christ in the New Testament, is performed by the Kingdom of God which Jesus Himself brings. But, this Kingdom, while having the possibility of being embodied in the community, is not an institution or to be identified with the visible Church...

"This Kingdom is presented only where pure love rises up in persons and goes out to persons. For only in such love and such activity does God reign in persons and for persons."⁵⁸. The inward yearning towards this Kingdom of God, and the turning of God towards us, create faith.

(3) The 'inner life of Jesus', 'the personal power of Jesus', and the 'picture of the historical Christ', are mediated through preaching. Christian preaching points the congregation to that which alone can create faith in its members.⁵⁹ Herrmann speaks of the reality which confronts us in Christian preaching as..."a Man (Jesus) whose appearance at every moment is to us the mighty Word of God, snatching us out of our troubles and making us feel that God desires to have us for His own, and so setting us free from the world and from our own natural impulses."⁶⁰. Commenting on the function of Christian preaching on the Easter

57. Systematic Theology, p.51-52.

58. Communion, p.205.

59. Systematic Theology, p.127.

60. Communion. p.305.

Story, Herrmann broadens his ideas on the context of preaching. In his "Systematic Theology" he writes: "Christian preaching must confine itself strictly to that which is presented to it as indubitable fact, If we accept such fact as God's gift to us, this real obedience of faith will help us then to have unqualified joy even in the narratives of the appearances of the Risen Lord (contradictory and obscure though they are to the historian), and of His communion with the disciples. It will, then be enough for us that this at any rate was the way in which the picture of these events established itself in the minds of those men who, as the first generation of a new humanity, lived in the power of the Person of Jesus. The fact that what happened at that time remains by God's will veiled from us will then cease to trouble us."⁶¹.

(4) In the realm of moral conduct and order, we may experience the true sovereignty of God. Through moral experience, abiding under the pressure of duty and under the discipline of people of whom we think with reverence, Christian piety may arise. Herrmann makes the following radical remarks: "Christian piety can only arise

61. Systematic Theology, p.127.

in the field of men's moral experience."⁶² "Our aim," Herrmann says in this connection, "must be to live in that eternal thing which we human beings can understand, namely, in the morally good...There is no true search for God without those painful conflicts which the desire to live in the Eternal causes every child of the world, and, if we have no joy in the sovereignty of the Eternal over the temporal in the realm of moral conduct and order, there is no true finding of Him."⁶³

We have outlined in the briefest way the various ways in which Herrmann thinks the historical Christ to be mediated and the conditions which prepare the entrance of the person into the "realm of history where we stand." We must turn now to another aspect of Herrmann's thought, namely the present experience of the person of Jesus which is independent of the veracity of the narratives in the New Testament, free from doctrinal formulations and ecclesiastical forms, and even to be understood apart from any item or feature of the "picture of Jesus" in the New Testament. It is, Herrmann emphasises in each of the writings we have used in our exposition, the present turning of God in Jesus which frees us from a counterfeit faith which

62. Communion, p.205.

63. Ibid., p.206-207.

must base certainty in the historical accuracy of the narratives or in the current assent to doctrines. While Jesus is no longer sensibly present to us as was the case with the first disciples,;..."we like them can receive God's forgiveness through our own experience of the power of the Person of Jesus...When we see God in Christ, the trustworthiness of the tradition will be established for us by something which we need not learn first from the tradition, since we see it for ourselves."⁶⁴. It is, as we have pointed out in numerous instances, at the place where we stand, within our own historical surroundings, and amidst our own concerns and activities, that the Man Jesus appears as He appeared to the "first generation of the New Humanity."⁶⁵. Faith is not our willingness to accept as veritable history the New Testament accounts of the communion of the first disciples with the Risen Lord, but in the fact that we are now really able to interpret the story of our own life as His dealing with us. "We shall," according to Herrmann, "find significance in all these things that are told of Him, but not until we have come to know Jesus Himself in His inner life."⁶⁶. Faith, Herrmann never tires of saying, finds its basis only in the experience

64. Systematic Theology, p.123.

65. Ibid., p.127.

66. Ibid., p.50.

which produced it; that is to say, faith is self-authenticating. Christians, not the unredeemed natural man.."are the only people who find this occurrence in a fact which cannot be obscured for us by any new experience, since we have only to think of it to see it standing before us again as something indestructible and incomparably great."⁶⁷. "We are," Herrmann believes, "really on the path which the Apostles trod when we in our position become certain of God and of His grace in the same way in which they in their position gained that certainty, namely, through the Person of Jesus. Thus, we have the same faith which they had and can rise to the level of their thoughts. The thoughts amid which their faith moves become, in such a case, no longer a prescription which we are to try to follow outwardly, but a means whereby we may gain inward enlightenment. They are to be a help to us in that task which is really incumbent upon us, namely, that we are to live with a faith of our own; they are not to be a law which prevents us from seeing the one thing needful."⁶⁸. It is the living God who, by the entrance of the historical Christ into our life which we experience,

67. Ibid., p.76.

68. Communion p.240.

initiates our turning to Him. This God is not the mere contents of a doctrine, nor the author of an event long past. To us, He is present in power and in the undeniable fact of the inner life of Jesus.

Are we to understand by the "fact" of Jesus' inner life a fact which can be known and perceived in a sensuous manner in our time, despite Herrmann's disavowal of the "sensible presence of Jesus?" Is Jesus sensibly present in our history as a "fact" as He was present to the first disciples? Can the personal life of Jesus be grasped as a real "fact" in history by a man who has no faith, or is it a "fact" of a different order? While these naively realistic questions seem unwarranted, Herrmann's ambiguous answers to them are worth considering. Herrmann, as we noted, speaks of the "fact" being grasped within the sphere of the brotherhood, through a mediation of the picture of the historical Christ in the New Testament, and the inability of those who are outside, i.e. the unredeemed man, to discern the "fact" or interpret its meaning for faith. But, he has a curious and contradictory sentence in his "Communion with the Christian God" which may mirror his vacillation

on the nature of the "fact". In the context of a discussion on the Exalted Christ, Herrmann is concerned to say that what we know and say of the self-revelation of God in the Personal life of Jesus is to be distinguished from our knowledge of the Exalted Christ. While we may be certain of the historical Christ within the limits of our earthly experiences, the Christian must admit that the Risen Christ is still hidden from him. It is not for believers to try to fly beyond those limits which are drawn around him while as yet his faith has to conflict with earthly experiences. Now, it is understandable that the Christian does not yet behold the full implications of his faith; but, does the New Testament warrant the separation which Herrmann and Ritschl make between the historical Jesus and the Exalted Christ? Is not our picture of the Christ determined by the two states, the historical and the Eternal glorification? But, this is not the primary contradiction which concerns us in this context. Herrmann says, contrasting God and the Exalted Christ, the one we experience now and the other which will be known when our faith is fully matured: "Quite otherwise do we think of God Himself, the God who reveals Himself through the Christ of history. For the personal life of Jesus

can be grasped as a real fact in history by a man who has no faith, or even after the power of faith has been extinguished in such a man. And it is because the invisible God uses this fact to make men certain of Himself that we can say He communes with us. In this fact of self-revelation, He reaches down into the realm of our earthly experience."⁶⁹.

The obvious meaning to be attached to this expression is one that concerns the "personal life of Jesus" and the texture of faith. On Herrmann's repeated showing, faith is created not by belief or disbelief in the historical facts or doctrinal formulations. But, does he not risk serious misunderstanding of his argument, especially when one considers the features of the personal life which he outlines - such features which are remembered and interpreted by the believing community - when he says this life can be grasped as a real fact by the historian or one who disinterestedly views the personal life of Jesus. He has, in an earlier section of our exposition, shown that the historian may not disprove the life of Jesus, but does the further remark on the "facts" being perceived in their "worth" place the events

69. Ibid., p.292.

and the interpretations of the events on a level with secular history, or with an interpretation of history which would not allow the Jesus of history the supreme place accorded Him by Herrmann and Christendom? He seems to want to make the "undeniable fact" of one piece with all history, and yet, he wants to retain these "facts" as "facts" to be interpreted within the fellowship of faith. In his words on the task of theology, he says: "Evangelical dogmatic has rather to obtain from the scriptures (called in the same context the classical expression of the spiritual life which is effected within the community and mediated through the personal faith of the theologian) the knowledge of the reality hidden from the natural man and unveiled to the eye of faith."⁷⁰.

How shall we estimate this incongruity in Herrmann's thought, or what appears to us to be incongruous with some of his other statements? We may say that there are two interpretations of history to be discerned in his writings. These are, (1) He wants to emphasise the historical nature of Christianity, seen through certain facts which occurred in the first century. Through these sensuous, obvious facts, discernible by the scientific historian, God's self-revelation took

70. Systematic Theology, p.63.

place. Yet, in these facts something was communicated which the eye of natural man could not see; nor could the tools of natural man either prove or disprove the reality which was given in these "facts". There was something suprahistorical, though Herrmann does not use this particular description of the numinous quality inherent in the "facts" when faith receives them, in the events which clustered around the life and work of Jesus. In faith, these historical happenings served to bring man to the realisation that God was speaking to him. In this thought patten, there is an objective event and a subjective appropriation. There is an outer occurrence and an inner appreciation. (2) In his second interpretation of history, Herrmann is anxious to show how faith becomes historically real apart from a belief in historical facts, the verification of which is probable, and further, how faith is independent of doctrines which we may be required to believe. In other words, to show how revelation is present and an undeniable element in our world, is Herrmann's objective. Herrmann is at pains to explicate how the appearance of Jesus belongs as much to our reality as the coat which we put on, or the house in which we dwell. Revelation on this showing, is not a

historical event of the distant past, but a personal experience in the immediate present. The Christ in Herrmann's theology is brought into the same relation to every believer as he bore to his first disciples. We are now a part of the revelatory events through our reception of the Christ.

But, how can this be so? Does Herrmann's thought avoid mysticism, which, on his own interpretation, abandons the concrete, historical surroundings in favour of some idea or absorption into a general level of life? He insists that this type of thought runs counter to the seriousness of the historical fact of Jesus' presence to us. Are the facts of Jesus' personal life evident to the eyes of natural men? His words, as we have noted, seem to infer this possibility. But, could it be that Herrmann in some of his expressions is anxious to avoid the accusations which may be levelled against his theology by the radical empiricists of his day, namely, subjectivism and mysticism?

These two interpretations of history, i.e. the historicity of the events in the first century, and the historical nature of the appearances of Jesus in the present, lie beside each other. It is

to others in the school that we must turn for some clarification and modification of these points. The thought of Pfleiderer and Ernest Troeltsch will afford illumination. Herrmann wants to say, it would appear, that, while we are necessarily dependent on the scriptural portraits for our picture of the Christ, and while the testimony of Christians within the sphere of the Brotherhood is vital in our experience of faith, we are brought into fellowship with the inner life of Jesus through and in the historical surroundings in which we stand. The picture of Jesus in the New Testament and our finding ourselves in the brotherhood serve as mediums of the revelatory process, but this historical occurrence, viz. the historical appearance of Jesus to us, happens in our history. Herrmann certainly leaves us with several questions, some of which are: (1) What is the nature of the historical? The complexities of the 'historical' will become clearer when we examine Troeltsch's point of view. (2) Can the life and person of Jesus be interpreted in the phenomalistic, naively realistic manner in which Ritschl and Herrmann seem to envision? (3) How can we really enter into or approach the 'inner life of Jesus'?

Is this participation in the 'inner life of Jesus' really possible on the basis of the theory of knowledge which limits Herrmann's exposition? His phenomenalism dictates the objects and limits of his theology and Christology, but, as we have pointed out, Herrmann's piety and devotional participation in the Christ point to some other interpretation of history and knowledge which is not confined to his Ritschlian bias, e.g. we know a thing through its effects or predicates. On the other hand, is Jesus' piety the foremost feature of the New Testament picture of the Christ? This would seem an oversimplification. The figure of Jesus as the Christ in the whole New Testament, of course, points to an inner relationship between God and Jesus, but this is not the primary feature. The picture of the Christ in the New Testament, as Paul Tillich, John Knox and others are careful to point out, is a total reality. This total reality does not disclude Jesus' sub-conscious, unconscious, and bodily existence. It includes His Jewish past, the history recorded in the Old Testament, His individual self in His individual character. All this is included in the reality. This is the reason why the early tradition was so much interested in the ancestry of Jesus, in his bodily generation, in the sociological surroundings and condition: "Nazareth", "carpenter", etc.

IV. Evaluation of Herrmann's Theology.

We conclude our exposition of Herrmann's thought by pointing to the object of his theological task. He proposed, we will recall, to inquire into the process whereby the individual spirit appropriates the Christ event. Ritschl had led the way in determining the primary object of Christian theology, viz. the historical revelation in Jesus, and Herrmann sought to discover how we are to speak of the historical Jesus narrated in the New Testament record. Herrmann's positive contribution to theological investigation of the historical Jesus is contained in his conviction that faith does not depend for its certainty on the scientific validation of probable historical data. Moreover, Herrmann's discussion of the limits of historical investigation removes or over-rules the thought that empirical factuality is the groundwork of faith. Surely Paul Tillich was influenced by Herrmann, his teacher, when he writes in his "Systematic Theology" Vol. II, the following lines - "Exactly what can faith guarantee? And the inevitable answer is that faith can guarantee only its own foundation, namely, the appearance of that reality which has created the faith... Faith is the immediate (not mediated by conclusions) evidence

of the New Being within and under the conditions of existence....One must say that participation, not historical argument, guarantees a personal life in which the New Being has conquered the old being....The concrete biblical material is not guaranteed by faith in respect to empirical factuality; but it is guaranteed as an adequate expression of the transforming power of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ."⁷¹ Leaving aside Tillich's special terminology, e.g. "New Being", and Tillich's more inclusive picture of the Christ, viz, Jesus' teaching, deeds, personality, inner life and suffering mirror and point to the "New Being", we may discern the obvious agreement between Herrmann and Tillich in their mutual grounding of faith in something other than probable historical data.

While Herrmann's interpretation of history is ambiguous - to the extent that he failed to explicate his view of the fact of Jesus being an undeniable part of the reality where we stand - he has advanced beyond the liberal portrait of the "factual" Jesus who lay behind the biblical records of Jesus as the Christ. He was not content to rest on the Ritschlian idea of the

71. Tillich, Paul, "Systematic Theology" - Vol.II.
page 114 - 115.

"revelational-value of Jesus" being the sole source of theology. He inquired further into the "historical Jesus" and his anxiety to show the contemporaneous value of this revelation in Jesus was a real advance over Ritschl's Christology. While Herrmann's questions and answers were directed to the present encounter of the Christian with the historical Jesus, another Ritschlian, standing on the left of Ritschl, sought to inquire into the nature of the "historical". "The comprehensive problem he (Troeltsch) sought to grapple with was the relation that must obtain between specifically Christian thought and the intellectual principles at work in the higher life of our time - its science, literature, political and economic thought."⁷² Troeltsch writes of historical research and its importance in his "Historism and its Problems"; "Historical research is now not merely one side of our way of interpreting things; it is not merely a partial satisfaction of the cognitive impulse; it is the basis of all thinking about values or norms; it is the means by which the race takes stock of its own essential being, its origins and its hopes."⁷³

72. Macintosh, H.R. "Types of Theology" - p.188.

73. Ibid., p. 196-197.

Another Ritschlian, also on the left of Ritschl, is concerned with another aspect of the problem of history neglected in Ritschl and Herrmann. Otto Pfleiderer's Gifford lectures, "Philosophy and Development of Religion", place an emphasis upon "development". Development is opposed to origin as the essence of Christianity, and Idea is opposed to fact as the basis of Christianity. The exclusivism of the Ritschlians, viz. their primary attachment to Jesus, even a form of Jesusolatry, is avoided in Pfleiderer and Troeltsch. In their efforts to postulate the development of Christianity, they went to the opposite extreme of underestimating the historic "event" in the first century.

In the Ritschlian school, as we shall soon discover in the next two chapters, we have a broader conception of history. Two interpretations of history clash: the emphasis on the origin of Christianity, viz. the New Testament picture divorced from the refinements of this picture in succeeding generations, and the emphasis on the organic, developmental character of Christianity through the centuries. Canon Quick, in his discussion of the themes of "Liberal Protestantism" and "Catholic and Evolutionary Modernism", pinpoints the tension in the Ritschlian school, though without the variations between the Ritschlians in

mind, when he writes: "It seems that history as such possesses two different kinds of value for religion; there is, on the one hand, the value of objective givenness or independent reality in the certain particular facts which history establishes, and there is, on the other, the value of the general law of growth and development in nature and human institutions which history as a whole exemplifies. There is the value of the particular fact standing established above time the same forever, because it did happen thus, and there is the value of the continuous growth and change which go on all the time, bringing new facts with them, and of which time is the very stuff. History may be made to emphasise either of these two values, that of the particular fact or that of the continuous growth, and if Liberal Protestantism has drawn out the first of these values, it certainly seems to have neglected the second."⁷⁴.

We move now to the neglected emphasis which was rectified within the Liberal Protestant camp, that is if we are warranted in considering Troeltsch and Pfleiderer initially in this camp. In these two men we discover a reaction which places them outside the Ritschlian interpretation of history, but in other facets of their systems they are in agreement with Ritschl and Herrmann, and to a large extent reveal their Hegelian and idealistic heritage.

74. Quick, "Liberalism, Modernism, and Tradition"-
p.25.

CHAPTER IV.

THE THEOLOGY OF ERNST TROELTSCH.

1. Introduction:

We move in the Ritschlian school to a man who was called at his bier, "The Hegel of our day."¹ Ernst Troeltsch, also known as the foremost exponent of the Religio-Historical school, was indeed as versatile as Hegel and in many respects as influential. There were developments in his thought - developments which placed him against his tutors, Ritschl and Frank, and developments which emphasised his kinship with the Idealists in the 19th century, Hegel, Schelling and others. The theology of Ernst Troeltsch, according to one interpretor, "was eclectic, constantly seeking for middle ways and prevailingly critical. Consequently, in his synthesis of the various mystical, romantic, philosophic, and scientific tendencies of his milieu, it soon became apparent that he did not quite agree with anybody."²

In order to create some sort of creative synthesis or resolvment of the tensions left by the Schliermacher-Ritschlian emphasis on the exclusivity of Christianity and the consequent cleavage erected between religion and philosophy, religion and science,

1. Sleigh, R.S. "The Sufficiency of Christianity" - p.21.

2. Ibid., p.33.

Troeltsch was forced to draw upon the ideas inherited from this line of reasoning and couple them with thought patterns which had been rejected. He wrote, according to one interpretor of his thought, "to anchor those who are adrift upon the modern troubled seas, for whom Christianity is only of use when it is offered to them as a living force of thought, and not as the mere beauty and static finality of ancient tradition."³. In a word, how to resolve the eternal conflict between Christianity and Civilisation was his sleepless task. H.R. Macintosh summarises Troeltsch's aim in the following manner: "The comprehensive problem he sought to grapple with was the relation that must obtain between specifically Christian thought and the intellectual principles at work in the higher life of our time - its science, literature, political and economic thought."⁴. In his efforts to effect some rapprochement between the realms of knowledge which had been separated in the one-sided phenomalism of Ritschl and in the natural-supernatural dichotomy of the official ecclesiastical theology, Troeltsch drew on thought patterns condemned by these two points of view. These phenomalists and supernaturalists would both dissociate themselves from any type of Hegelian speculative theology designed to relate and

3. Ibid., p.24.

4. Macintosh, H.R. "Types of Theology" - p.188.

integrate realms of knowledge.

Possibly Troeltsch is recognised primarily for his three volume history of "The Social Doctrine of the Christian Churches", and, in particular, for the three types of ethical activity stemming from the three interpretations of the Church - the Church, Sect and Mystic. Rheinhold Niebuhr and Richard Niebuhr and other Christian writers on ethics have made these distinctions well-known in their treatises. Troeltsch's exploration of the Max Weber thesis - the relationship between Calvinism and Capitalism - has been an invaluable guide in contemporary ethics. But, these ethical emphases in no wise exhaust the variety and richness of his theological activity. His thinking is too wide and diverse for considered treatment in our exposition. Our interests are mainly three: (1) We shall want to indicate his break with the Ritschlian positions. (2) This rupture will encompass his view of religion and, in particular, his so-called "Religious A priori". (3) Troeltsch's interpretation of history and, in particular, his interpretation of Christian history and the place of Jesus, will be vital in our exposition. We shall want to understand Troeltsch's "historising of life."

In our exposition we will be guided by an excellent and sympathetically written book. R.S. Sleigh's study of Troeltsch's religious philosophy, called "The Sufficiency of Christianity", develops Troeltsch's thought with particular regard to the "religious a priori" and some of the other points which interest us. Because this a priori is determinative of any just appraisal of the differences existing between Troeltsch and his Ritschlian colleagues, and because the a priori constitutes his important advance in the interpretation of the relationship between history and faith, we shall want to concentrate on Sleigh's formulation of the theological system. It is rare indeed, particularly after surveying commentaries on Troeltsch's thought, to find an interpretation which gives some attention to the historical developments in Troeltsch's thinking and which, moreover, attempts to outline and criticise the problems to which Troeltsch addressed himself. However, we are not, simply because of the movement in our central thesis, i.e. the relationship between history and myth, concerned with Troeltsch's philosophy of religion in its entirety.

Our first concern will be to indicate in the broadest fashion Troeltsch's break with Ritschl.

His rupture is twofold, historical and philosophical. In his interpretation of history, Troeltsch, unlike Ritschl and Herrmann, was concerned to emphasise the unity and homogeneity of all historical phenomena - the only assumption which he thinks it is necessary and possible for the modern scientific consciousness to make, but which at once excludes all possibility of admitting a specifically Christian casuality in revelation or in miracle. History is relative, and the ideas and institutions appearing in history are conditioned and expressed through thought forms appropriate to the era in which they appear. The ecclesiastical-dogmatic approach of Ritschl and Herrmann is invalid on historical and philosophical grounds. Historically, the absolute approach to historical phenomena, whether taken by the Ritschlians or supernaturalists, is incapable of relating the events which are thought to occur objectively in history to the ones apprehending these events. Ritschl's ecclesiastical-dogmatic conception of history, while paying homage to the principle of spiritual autonomy in its repudiation of all external church authority, cannot supply a scientific comprehension of history or any sort of scientific

justification of personal spiritual conviction. The dogmatic interpretation, because it rests on the assumption of the dual nature of history as natural and supernatural, cannot escape the meshes of historical relativism, or avoid the abyss of sheer subjectivism, or rebut the reproach of positivism. The dogmatic method makes an untenable distinction between historical research concerned with saving facts and untroubled by the thought of relativity, and on the other hand, a form of historical research which is profane or secular, critical or relativistic. But, the historical method, as Troeltsch understands it and utilises it in his writings, puts this distinction aside and works on the principle that all history is on one level and of one quality. Speaking of historical research and its importance, Troeltsch writes these words in his "Historism and its Problems". "Historical research is now not merely one side of our way of interpreting things; it is not merely a partial satisfaction of the cognitive impulse; it is the basis of all thinking about values or norms, it is the means by which the race takes stock of its own essential being, its origins and its hopes."⁵

5. Ibid., p.196-197.

Moreover, the Ritschlian theory of knowledge in its exclusive phenomenal interpretation of events precludes the mind from knowing reality as it actually exists, but only as it appears to us. Historical events, the manifold phenomena, are unrelated to the mind that receives this material. Troeltsch was concerned to show that the manifold of experience is not foreign to the mind, purely contingent, or mutually indifferent, but has its own inherent elements or laws in virtue of which all we know, whether in the (natural), moral, aesthetic, or religious world, is a recognition on the part of our minds of their own characteristics in the empirical manifold. These rational characteristics (or a priori unifying laws, formerly considered) may be, or, in fact are, different, according as they concern or refer to the trans-subjective reality of nature, morality, aesthetics, or religion; but, they are always laws of the mind, recognised to be interiorly necessary and valid, which give to our minds that degree of unity which belongs to them as a whole, or in the individual spheres of experience, natural, moral, aesthetic, or religious. To point to these laws is for Troeltsch in the religious sphere the justification or explanation of religion as a necessary constituent of the mind. To point to these a priori unifying

laws is for Troeltsch the explanation of how the Divine comes within the conscious mind, or how we come into His presence. Religious experience, individual and historical, has formal conditions, and to indicate these as fully as possible is to explain religion and to lay hold on the conditions of its experience, control and propagation.

But, in these last remarks, we are moving into another difference between Ritschl and Troeltsch which must be developed at a later stage in our exposition. Meanwhile, to return to the two essential differences between Ritschl and Troeltsch, historical and philosophical. Philosophically, as we have to some extent implied in Troeltsch's view of knowledge, he shared the confidence of the Hegelian theologians in the power of human thought to grasp being and to relate the various facets of thought in some coordinate fashion. For Troeltsch, the reality or objects of science and religion are somehow ultimately one, but our modes of apprehension are various, and, therefore, there is for Troeltsch no absolute distinction between intellect and will, theoretic reason and practical faith. The idea of God which receives its content only in union with historical religious life is an ontological concept which signifies the reality in whom all things exist, in whom we live and move and have our being. The

finite, in a concrete experience, is related to God. Thought and reality are related. The idea of God, e.g. "the best we think or can think", is an ontological concept, which, in relation to Time, is to be understood as representing a reality which is striving to actualise itself in the temporal process, and this process is a historical development of the capacities of finite personalities in their growing apprehension. H.R. Macintosh says that Troeltsch's "work as a whole rests on a single great metaphysical assumption - that, as Hegel put it, the real is the rational, the universe a significant, because reason pervaded, system of things...The world process displays itself as the effect in time and space of a supersensible reality."⁶ The active presence of an absolute spirit is affirmed in the "a priori" consciousness and in every historical movement which is intelligible in a historico-philosophic way. Though this does not imply that for Troeltsch the finite and the infinite are simply identical. His philosophy was not moulded along the static lines taken by Hegel in the resolvment of the infinite and finite in the objective realisation of their identity and unity. The infinite in Troeltsch's philosophy is not lost in the finite, nor are the irrational, alogical characteristics of history submerged in the unity

6. Ibid., p.191.

and development of history. The evolutionary moments of history are individual and concrete. They are individual, creative expressions, not logical, mediated links in an overwhelming process of the infinite realising itself in the finite. The metaphysic of history, then, is always subjective, apprehensible in a personal ethico-religious attitude towards it. History is only apprehensible in the activity of ethico-religious faith, and intuitively felt without our being able to construct it in any purely speculative manner.⁷ There can, then, be no question of any Hegelian rationalisation of history, and, therefore, the analogies, tendencies, and types of historical (religious) evolution are allowed to exist in all their individual peculiarities in a non-logical relationship. "Thus the metaphysic of history", according to Sleigh's interpretation of Troeltsch, "is in every case individual, personal, subjective.. And the true religious metaphysic which delivers us from the bondage of historical accident and naturalism, as well as from the clutches of mere tradition, is a type of philosophical mysticism which makes room for real development and for real personality."⁸

But, Troeltsch's ontological emphasis on unity in

7. Sleigh, p.50.

8. Ibid., p.51.

variety and diversity is subject to a form of dualism. Sleight describes this as an "existential dualism."⁹ Troeltsch centers history and religion in the region of personal choice, and his treatment of the a prioris (religion, logic, aesthetic) appears to break up the mind into separate compartments. While being vigorously anti-rationalist, or rather anti-intellectualistic, he seems to champion a type of religious rationalism, i.e. a formal atheoretic rationalism, which necessarily involves an existential and some type of epistemological dualism. In the variations in the consciousness, *vis á vis* the separate a prioris, Troeltsch was led to argue for a dual system of knowledge, corresponding to a corporeal and to a spiritual reality, whose validity is respectively theoretic and atheoretic. There is an inner essential difference between the so-called productive autonomous principles of the phenomenal world, and those of the ethical, aesthetic and religious world. Is it not possible to assume that we are dealing with one and the same reality, which is apprehensible by different modes, or from different systematic standpoints, which severally have their own specific standards, and are

9. Ibid., p.101.

essentially related to one another through their common basis both in the subject and in the object?

John Baillie's criticism of Troeltsch's historical method may clarify the dualism in Troeltsch's thought. Baillie says that Troeltsch believed that he could begin with a mere amassment of the phenomena of religious experience without any regard to their value. This amassment is the psychology of religion, and only when it has finished its work can the epistemological inquiry begin. We are in Troeltsch's view concerned first of all with the acts and secondly with the valuation of the facts. Empiricism and rationalism are considered to be successive stages in the scientific inquiry. Instead of selecting certain phenomena on the basis of some valuational hypothesis, Troeltsch proceeds to amass random facts and then evaluate them. Baillie comments on this questionable procedure..."Description and valuation, therefore, instead of being made successive and assigned to different branches of study, must always work hand in hand with one another. Our judgments of value must be our guides in our investigation of fact, and our investigation of fact must, in its turn, progressively correct our judgments of value."¹⁰. If Troeltsch had proceeded in the manner Baillie points out, there

10. Baillie, John, "Interpretation of Religion"-

would have been a more intimate relation between value and fact in his philosophy.

Troeltsch was concerned, so he says, "only with the question how far knowledge of truth is contained in the religious consciousness itself."¹¹. His treatment of the question brings into focus another deviation from Ritschl and the Neo-Kantians. Ritschl believed that the ethical and moral preceded the religious state. Religion came into being as a product of the reflective consciousness. But Troeltsch's starting point is stated in the following way by him: "Religion as the special category or form of those psychic states which result from the more or less dimly apprehended presence of the divine in the soul - the sense of the presence and reality of the superhuman and infinite - that is, beyond all doubt, a far truer starting point for the analysis of the rational a priori of religion."¹².

2. Religious a priori.

Troeltsch's philosophy of religion is too intricate and manifold for adequate summary in our exposition. We are interested in a few facets of his philosophy which will bear upon our primary concern, i.e., his understanding of Christianity as a historical

11. Ibid., p.238.

12. Ibid., p.242.

phenomenon and his interpretation of the place of Jesus.

Troeltsch believes the experience of the Divine is immediate. This experience is predominantly a state of feeling (Gefuhlsgehalt) - an immediate presentation which is central, inwardly necessary and practically indispensable. This does not imply that religion is mere feeling. It is feeling (affection, conation and cognition) in unity. Within the events of human life, an affective consciousness of the absolute is attainable and immediately experienced by the finite spirit. The mystical experience of the infinite in the present is central, while the ethical activity which is provoked, the mythic and symbolic descriptions and social expressions in worship, and the ecclesiastical forms and dogmas are peripheral and secondary. Religion is considered to be constitutive to consciousness - a possibility which precedes ethical and moral activity, and social and doctrinal forms. Moreover, religion is understood by Troeltsch to be, or to begin in, a naive mystical experience where thought and feeling are fused in one indistinguishable whole. This naive, mystical experience may produce some astonishing mythological machinery which in due course serves the purpose of fixing the beliefs of

the group and, to a larger extent, confirming the group in certain forms and practices.

How, then, is this mystical religious experience and affirmation, with its implications which claim to be a knowledge of God and a redemptive experience of His life, to be shown to be actually such and not illusion and self-deception? While religion overflows intellectually into a creed, eventually into a cult and volitionally into a communal way, Troeltsch is not, as we have intimated, primarily concerned with these expressions. He expresses his interest in the following words: "We are concerned only with the question how far knowledge of truth is contained in the religious consciousness itself."¹³. As we pointed out, there are two stages in Troeltsch's survey of the religious consciousness. The first stage he takes to consist in the construction of a purely empirical psychology of religion, that is to say, a mere amassment of the facts of religion without any regard to their significance, value, or truth content. But, later, in his study of religious phenomena, e.g., the naive, mystical experience, the question as to the truth of the beliefs and the validity or the objectivity of the experiences had to be faced. This brings us, according to Troeltsch, to the second state in our inquiry, but it is a stage to

13. Mackintosh, op. cit., p.238.

which we cannot proceed until we have found some instrument by which to distinguish the true and valuable from the merely illusory and subjective. How does Troeltsch proceed to postulate a universal relevance for these mystical experiences - these 'creative', 'new' and 'spontaneous' experiences through which the finite and the infinite are united?

First, Troeltsch repudiates two positions which had held the field as the norms by which religious truth was verified. These two authorities were: supernaturalism and a pragmatic, ethical validation of religious truth. The first thought pattern makes it impossible to speak of the Divine operating normally in the historical sphere. Man is transformed by a supernatural change and a redemptive process which overwhelms him. On this view God mechanically steps into the historical arena at a given point in time, declaring his presence in an Absolute Personality through questionable means, e.g., miracles, revelatory knowledge, etc. This metaphysic dislikes any rational scrutiny of the action of the so-called "absentte God", vis á vis the God who arbitrarily and radically steps in and out of time. Moreover, this revelatory knowledge is in violent contradiction to all other legitimate interests of knowledge.

The second validation, that of the pragmatists and utilitarians - Ritschl, Herrmann and Kant, according to Troeltsch, are in this group - fails to explain how religion is constitutive and integral to the subject. Religion viewed as useable and practical is in the last analysis of a quantitative nature, i.e. statistically verifiable on the basis of the majority opinion, etc. The theory of knowledge upon which this validation of religious truth rests limits reality to phenomenal appearances.

But, Troeltsch was concerned to point out that knowledge is only possible as it results from the recognition of rational characteristics which are common both to the subject and to the object perceived. There are formal laws and rational characteristics inherent in religious experience. If these unifying principles are indicated, the validity of religious experience will not depend upon some supernaturalistic and pragmatic criteria. Although religious knowledge does not preclude a concern with that Being which is transcendent or with the practical application of knowledge, it, i.e., religious truth, is not initially based on these apprehensions.

Starting with Kant, Troeltsch proceeded to construct a critique of religion which was analogous to the constitutive principles formulated by Kant in his a priori of nature. Troeltsch's results in his psychological analysis of religious experience, with its personalistic and theistic implications, together with the results of the epistemological analysis and its similar, though independently reached, implications, jointly yield what he termed the a priori condition upon which the possibility and fact of religion depend. The religious consciousness of union with the infinite is an experience which relates the finite centrally to the whole development of life, and indicates the ultimate law of its significance and moment. In the great religious personalities, their 'revelations' are disclosures of this relationship of the finite to the absolute (naively apprehended and symbolically expressed, of course), which, the more clearly it is apprehended, the greater the degree of their fellowship with God, and the more urgently it calls for a closer union of all the activities of the mind within the religious centre - a relation in virtue of which all worths are related to an absolute existence in their origin and standard. Religion exists in this, in short, that it is a law of normal consciousness,

and is such both from its feeling of interior necessity and obligation and from its organic position within consciousness, which later only receives through religion its union with and relation to an objective world-reason.

The religious a priori is: (1) The epistemological principle of religion. It is a brief expression indicative of the fact that there are in consciousness, immanent, rational elements, recognised by us as unconditionally valid, which alone make a doctrine of worths possible, and relate us vitally to God, whom these elements presuppose. (2) It is the ontological principle of all life. It is that which gives a basis to the ideal necessities of our nature, logical, aesthetic, and ethical - that is, their vital relation to and root in the unconditional, the absolute consciousness beyond and beneath all its phenomenal manifestations. (3) It is an epistemological and ontological principle, being realised in the development of historical religious evolution. It is not something ready-made (like Kant's categories). We never come to experience with any ready-made standard of fact or of worth, but only with a purely formal constraint, necessitating us to relate everything to an ultimate worth.

The religious a priori, then, is only brought

gradually to light by individual personal appropriation of, and approximation to, the ultimate impulse and goal of history in communion with religious experience in historical evolution. Summarily speaking: by the religious a priori Troeltsch meant the regulative, creative, epistemological, and ontological principle of religion. It gives to the religious state of feeling (Gefuhlsgehalt), in itself a purely irrational (alogical) factual experience, its fundamental quality of rational necessity, and, therefore, its principle of the formation of the characteristic ideas of religion, the basis of the independent dialectic of faith, with its ideas of God, the world, man, redemption, and the life to come. The ideas of God achieved in religious experience, discernible on psychological, epistemological and ontological analysis, receives its increasing content only in its union with historical life.

To return to our question: The reality and validity of religious experience and knowledge will be assured, Troeltsch maintained, inasmuch as the naive, mystical religious phenomena can be shown to fall into rational form both in the individual and in history, and to partake of the character of a universal valid organisation, evaluation, and elicitation of what is concretely real.

Troeltsch's religious a priori implies an inductive metaphysic of religion - a metaphysic which is concerned to draw out the structures and laws of the mind in their union with the structures and laws of the object. This metaphysic of history is not concerned with an absolute, timeless union, nor does it rely on absolute norms introduced by supernaturalism, e.g., revelation and miracle, to obscure the relative, factual and irrational nature of the union. The historical religious experience is constantly renewed and continually expressed anew in different historical epochs. Moreover, the various religions of history are to be understood as merely unrelated, concrete phases of experience. It is impossible on this understanding to merge these historical expression into a composite non-historical, purely philosophical form of religion. If we select a historical religion as the highest expression, the proof of demonstration of its supremacy can only be historico-philosophic.

The foregoing discussion has been illuminating in respect of three things: there is a relationship between the subject experiencing religion and the object or subject of that experience. Religion is a central self-determination of the whole personality towards the being and essence of reality,

as an experienced consciousness of an absolute spiritual content and meaning of existence. Religion is not reducible to morality, ethics, or metaphysics, though it may entail these expressions. Secondly, Troeltsch's historical method excludes the possibility of the emergence of an 'absolute value' in the course of history which might be used as a standard. We shall see the bearing of this position on his interpretation of historical Christianity. Finally, the four groups of ideas in the religious a priori of principles - God, the world, man, and the life to come - find varying, unrelated degrees of expression in the historical forms of religion. The religious a priori does not determine in advance the nature of, or the precondition of, the religious experience.

While the implications of Troeltsch's religious a priori could occupy us further, we must move in our exposition to our primary question: What place can be assigned Christianity as a historical expression of a naive, religious experience? What importance can be attached to the absolute claim made on Christianity's behalf by the Church, if Christianity is one among many historical, concrete and manifold expressions of the idea of God?

3. The Essence of Christianity.

We begin to answer the above questions if we give some attention to Troeltsch's treatment of the essence of Christianity. The three-fold essence of the Christian religion is summarised in Sleigh's book. The first point concerns the criticism of historical Christianity. This criticism and evaluation is immanent. Within the region of personal appreciation and decision on the basis of concentrated historical investigation can the truth of Christianity be determined. In the second place, the essence is an evolutionary principle, a self-developing spiritual impulse bearing within itself rich possibilities and appropriative capacity. On this principle, a complete, perfect revelation of a 'religious personality' is ruled out. Christianity has from the outset exhibited not merely its immanent consequences, but, also, its appropriative capacity in taking up new elements. There does not exist any simple historical point or idea which might justly be taken to be the norm. There are no simple norms within Christianity itself which make the reduction of the essence to a simple formula possible. These adaptations and appropriations are

constituent parts of the essence. Thirdly, the essence is ideal. The meaning of history is never exhausted in our mere understanding of the past. When we consider history we do so in order to appropriate from it what is essential to furnish ourselves with an effective norm for the future. This means, of course, that for us the determination of the essence arises out of an act of will, a faith in the future, upon the basis of a history which has been investigated in an historico-scientific way. R.S. Sleight quotes from Troeltsch in the following connection: "The determination of the essence is for us a creative synthesis of the past with the present for the sake of the future; it is nothing less than the formation of the Christian idea corresponding to our present historical situation and needs. The objective never lies ready-made anywhere that we might simply take it up; it is in every case created anew, and has its obligatoriness in an interfusion of what is out historical religious possession and of personal conscientious further formation and transformation."¹⁴.

While Christianity possesses its classic expression and witness in the Bible, and is founded upon the prophets and Jesus, it develops its immanent and appropriative capacities in its creative syntheses

14. Sleight, R.S. "The Sufficiency of Christianity" - p.112-113.

in the course of historical evolution. It is never static. It is different in its varying historical situation, and is appropriative in every epoch by historical feeling and understanding, as well as by conscientious subjective and creative interpretation and construction.

But, what place does Jesus occupy within the historical Christian organism or fellowship? If Christianity is to be considered from its manifold appropriations and its many creative personalities, what place can be assigned to Jesus the Christ?

There is no metaphysical solution, according to Troeltsch, to these questions, nor are there external norms, e.g. bible, doctrine, etc. The centrality of Jesus in Christianity must be approached via psycho-epistemological considerations. Troeltsch, according to Sleigh's careful formulation of his ideas, does not deny that Jesus had a naively absolute relationship to God, nor does he deny the possibility that His disciples and the Christian community experienced this naive absolute in His person. But, we must in our day set aside these temporal, mythic embodiments and embellishments, since the new religious motives which come from our historical heritage, and result from our inner religious elaboration of the modern scientific outlook, call for new mythic and ideal

expressions. In his historico-philosophical method, Troeltsch allows us to recognise the supremacy of Christianity's conception of personality and its confidence that it alone points in the direction of the absolute lying beyond history. But, his absoluteness, or finality, is not to be predicated of one man, namely Jesus. Jesus is our efficient historical expression of the nature of God, our clearest human symbol of the Divine. Jesus is a great religious personality, and to contemplate him is uplifting. He may be called a type or symbol whose place no other can fill. Yet, as a symbol, He is relative after all; as Troeltsch might have stated the matter, He is eternal but not Eternal.

Mackintosh points out that, while Troeltsch as a philosopher felt obliged to make Jesus relative and at best an exemplary personality, a warmer faith was ever seeking to intervene. Mackintosh quotes some of Troeltsch's positive assertions. "The God of Jesus is the object of faith, and Jesus Himself is transformed into the historical mediator and revealer....The whole content of life and faith in Christianity continues to be related to the prototype found in the Person of

Jesus, and faith in Him is the one unifying bond of the Christian community."¹⁵.

Concerning the finality of the Christian religion, Troeltsch's contention is to the effect that no religion, even Christianity, is valid universally or forever. Because all faith is but an individual form of the pure spirit of religion, we are prohibited from attaching universal significance to any expression of faith. While eschewing evolutionary development, to the extent of a future embodiment of the absolute faith, his theory of individual vital forms is stated in the following manner: "The universal law of history consists precisely in this, that the Divine Reason or the Divine life, within history, constantly manifests itself in always-new and always-peculiar individualisations - and hence, that its tendency is not towards unity or universality at all, but, rather, towards the fulfillment of the highest potentialities of each separate department of life. It is this law which, beyond all else, makes it quite impossible to characterise Christianity as the reconciliation and goal of all the forces of history, or indeed to regard it as anything else than an historical individuality."¹⁶.

15. Mackintosh, p.208.

16. Ibid., p.212.

4. Evaluation of Troeltsch's Theology:

Our primary question - which had been raised by the right-wing Ritschlians - was how are we to understand the presence of Jesus within our realm, within the place where we stand? Ritschl, as we noted, based a knowledge of God on the historical revelation in Jesus, and Herrmann sought to draw out the implications of this central datum in so far as he was concerned to point to the present significance of the historical Christ. Herrmann left the question concerning the present appearing of Jesus in our history open. When his thought failed him, he relied on dogmatic, devotional language to make his point. He attempted to bind the mediating influences, e.g. Bible, community, moral law, with the present presentiment of the historical Jesus. We saw that further exposition of the meaning of history in general, and the meaning of religious experience in particular, was demanded. We turned to Troeltsch for guidance, hoping that the historical significance of Christianity as a past phenomenon and as a present possibility would receive some clarification. Troeltsch's concern, as we have summarised it, was with a fuller explanation and formulation of the historical method. History, according to him, is

our only source of norms, and the philosophy of history is our only lamp amid the darkness. History is, unlike the Ritschlian dogmatic-ecclesiastical position, all of one piece. History itself, within the realm of personal, ethico-religious decisions made in any given period, relative and conditional norms are erected. There is no notion that within religious experience or redemption there is any appropriation of a redemptive act of history. Redemption is a present experience, arising out of our idea of God as Grace, in which, or through which, God Himself is present as Redeemer. An idea which inspires us with the power of transcending all the limitations and insinuations of our finitude, and enables us to make amends and to take our share in working out the existential evil of life.

Troeltsch, it would appear, lost sight of the one pole of the dilemma, viz. the historical Jesus and the importance of the historical picture of the Christ as the essential 'circle' within which the Christian religious experience is mediated. He was concerned with religious experience and not a distinctive phenomenology of Christian experience. The relationship between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith is virtually overlooked. Whilst we may agree that religious experience is

unique, and that its norms are fixed on the basis of a ethico-religious decision, we should want to quarrel with the inadequate attention Troeltsch gave to the distinctiveness of the Christian experience. While emphasising the individuality, concreteness and existential nature of the religious decision, Troeltsch's philosophical formulations excluded reference to the universality and finality of the Christian position. We may agree that the absoluteness of the Christ cannot be arbitrarily or heteronomously derived, but there would seem to be some basis for this predication within the Christian experience.

Troeltsch ideas on the features of the religious, even Christian, experience, viz. the naive, mystical character of this experience, which later receives some scientific formulation, leads us to another critical point in his philosophy, namely the relationship between the experience and the description of the experience. It is not clear what Troeltsch wants to mean by the mythic embodiment of the Christian experience and the unimportance of these temporal, mythic descriptions in the present. We may, on the basis of our exposition, postulate several points which appear to guide him in his interpretation. (1) It is obvious that his "demything" of the experience

would be based on the thoughts which come from modern science, i.e., impossibility of miracles, supernatural and the first century ways of speaking about the transcendence. (2) In some degree, despite Troeltsch's emphasis on individual forms and the existential levels in concrete experiences, he extracts certain ideas or ideals from the Christian religion which he considers to be of universal significance, e.g. its conception of the supremacy of personality and its symbolisation of the absolute which is beyond history. In a sense, this may be said to be an elimination of the 'mythological' descriptions and a retention of the eternal ideas in the experience. At least, this is the popular criticism of the religious-historical school. Yet, on the other hand, the constitutive nature of religion and the mystical quality in religious experience points away from such a facile criticism of his thought. However, the experience is described, it is still in the realm of "feeling", and it must be remembered that Troeltsch attached a cognitive value to "feeling". He may be trying to say that, whatever the period, in the first century or in the present, the symbolic, mythical nature of religion is necessary and valid. He may

be calling for an interpretation of the primitive, mystical and mythical experience and not an elimination of the essential ways which the experience must be spoken of.

In the last analysis, we have in Troeltsch another facet of Christianity elaborated. Ritschl and Herrmann, we will recall, placed supreme value on the revelation in the historical Jesus. Ritschl did not, apparently, tell us what was involved in his view of history, while Herrmann drove the point home in his analysis of the present significance of the encounter with the Jesus of history in and through His inner life in the realm in which we live. Herrmann left, as we noted, many questions open - the main one being his interpretation of history. Troeltsch's advance beyond Ritschl and Herrmann, at least for the purpose of our exposition of the theme, the relationship between history and faith, lay in his analysis of the "historical". He rejected the view of history which had guided Ritschl and Herrmann to postulate supreme value to Jesus and, yet in his theology, he failed to give adequate attention to the central problem which had been raised in the Ritschlian school. This problem, as we have outlined it, concerns a view of history

which will take into consideration Troeltsch's historical method, viz. the homogeneous nature of all history, and, at the same time, provide some place in this view for the unique confrontation of Christ and the believer in the present. We are left on the brink of the modern discussions of the problem with several facets of our problem illuminated, but none of the facets related, or even paradoxically considered, in any of the men we have surveyed. There are many ways of discussing the two trends which we have seen working in the 19th century. We pointed to one trend in the early decades of the century which was expressed in the Hegelians. This was a movement away from concrete, particular events in history. In a word, the Hegelians began with the idea (Begriff) and came to history or the ways the ideas were expressed in history. After moving in this direction from the thesis to the antithesis, the movement came to a rest in the fulfillment in the third movement, the static synthesis. The other trend which was inaugurated by the "search for the historical Jesus" behind the garments of faith began with the "facts" and reached out for the "idea" or rationale of the "facts". Within the theological school which provided the theological

formulation of this "quest", we have noted variations and advances. From the abstract notion of the "fact" of the historical Jesus in Ritschl, Herrmann sought to clothe the supreme revelation in the first century with contemporaneous significance. But, Herrmann, persuaded by the Ritschlian bias against metaphysics and upon the phenomalistic theory of knowledge, could not relate his ambiguous interpretation of history. Troeltsch gave attention to the nature of the historical, but he sacrificed, it would appear, the particular historical event of Jesus the Christ to the development which occurs in history. In our next chapter - the last in this section of the thesis - Otto Pflleiderer, in his Gifford lectures in 1894, is convinced that we are to conceive of the essence of religion in its final stages, not in its historical beginnings. The point which the Ritschlians feared, i.e., speculation and metaphysics, is receiving its rightful place in a theological system.

CHAPTER V.

THE THEOLOGY OF OTTO PFLEIDERER.

1. Introduction:

It is debatable whether we are justified in discussing Otto Pfleiderer's philosophy in a section of our thesis devoted to the "Quest of the Historical Jesus." Pfleiderer was one of Ritschl's critics. While he, like Troeltsch, had learned from Ritschl's theory of knowledge and his ethico-religious motifs, Pfleiderer, again like Troeltsch, endeavoured to erect a creative synthesis between Religion and culture, theology and philosophy. While the Ritschlians had disparaged philosophy, Troeltsch and Pfleiderer sought to correlate the claims of theology and philosophy. We give this brief survey of Pfleiderer's theology more as a bridge between the Ritschlians and their successors in this century. Pfleiderer's and Troeltsch's thought constitute a transition from one or more Ritschlian motifs to the theological constructions in Temple, Bultmann and Tillich, though it must be remembered that these transitional theologies retained many of the so-called liberal emphases in their thinking, notably their optimistic view of human nature. We may now discuss some of Pfleiderer's themes with the purpose of

elucidating his understanding of history and how the Jesus of history may be encountered in our day.

Otto Pfleiderer's "Philosophy and Development of Religion", being the Gifford lectures delivered before the University of Edinburgh in 1894, will serve as the basis of our discussion. The two volumes of the Gifford lectures give the essence of Pfleiderer's chief works (The Philosophy of Religion, 4 Vols; Paulinism, 2 Vols; Development of Theology since Schleiermacher).

The correlative method of Pfleiderer may be seen in his two lectures, in the first volume, on "Religion and Morality" and "Religion and Science". In the chapter, "Religion and Morality", Pfleiderer claims to disclose that the two conceptions spring from one root, and flourish or die together. Christianity has made this inner connection of the two one of its fundamental principles. "Morality," according to Pfleiderer, "has here its firm ground, its living root, in the consciousness of our sonship to God, in love to God the Father, and to Christ, the ideal of the Divine man, in surrender to the Universal Divine purpose of the world, namely, the Kingdom of God."¹

The discussion of the relation of religion and

1. Pfleiderer, Otto, "Philosophy and Development of Religion" - Vol. I. p.150.

science are equally complementary. Instead of the exclusivity of natural realism or subjective idealism, the truth is shown to lie in the combination of a certain element in both. Faith is the basis of all science - religious belief is presupposed by all scientific knowledge as the base of its possibility. Where science assumes that the senses and perception rightly interpret outward reality, or the uniformity of nature and the reign of law, these are unprovable assumptions; assumptions, moreover, that imply that outward things are constituted in harmony with our reason.

The two chapters (Vol. 1, Chapters V and VI) on the revelation of God in nature and in the Moral and religious world, which contain Pfleiderer's statement of the argument for the Divine Existence, are a closely-welded chain of reasoning. In these chapters, the correlative, synthetical reasoning of Pfleiderer is carried through on other topics. For example, when speaking about the expectation with which we come to nature and what we find in nature, he says: "How then is this correspondence between the laws of our thinking, which are not given to us from without, and the laws of our being, which are not made by us, explained? So far as I can see, only from this - that the two

have their common ground in a divine thinking, in a creative reason, which manifests its thoughts - partly in the order of the real world and partly in the thinking of our understanding as it copies that order."².

It is necessary, to summarise the argument from the moral idea and the religious life in man, to think of the 'idea of right' which the religious consciousness recognises as the revelation of the holy will of God. He recognises in conscience an innate as well as an empirical factor; one giving it its self-identical, abiding, formal character, the unconditional authority with which it speaks, the other explaining its variableness and diversity. Suffice it further to say in summary fashion that Pfleiderer believes that, on the basis of the universal experience, man's nature is so constituted that some kind of consciousness of God is inevitable to him. This may be only a presentiment of a search, but, in this consciousness, we must recognise the original revelation of the love of God. "All human consciousness of God presupposes a self-communication of God, a working of the Divine Logos in the finite spirit."³. In the Christian doctrine of God as love, revelation reaches its highest stage.

2. Ibid., p.145.

3. Ibid., p.146.

But, we are not concerned to elaborate Dr. Pfleiderer's system in any detailed manner. We are intent on the interpretation given of Christianity and, more generally, Pfleiderer's interpretation of history. His views are governed by two closely connected principles: First, the theory of development, and, secondly, the uniformity of the historical process. The first principle holds that the different religious systems are stages in a process - Christ and Christianity representing the goal. Each Christian doctrine is derived from, or connected with, earlier forms in other countries and religions, these having an organic relationship. The two propositions are given as the kernel of his theory in his own words: "All the life of the earth is one uninterrupted process of development, which has reached its goal in man, and from this point the natural process passes over into the historical process; all the forms of life from the lowest to the highest are developed out of simple, fundamental forms, under the co-operation of inner vital impulses and external conditions of life."⁴.

The belief in God, or the forms which these beliefs have taken, were not ready-made from the beginning, but were formed out of pre-historical belief in spirits. The descriptions of God and

4. Ibid., p.155.

His nature came from these pre-historical beliefs in ancestral and nature spirits, through polytheism, refined and Greek and Indian speculations, Jewish prophetic teaching, and, finally, to a New Testament and modern religious conception. But, Pfleiderer distinguishes between the historical origins and the essence of religion. We are, according to him, to conceive of the essence of religion in its final stages, not in its historical beginnings....

"in the course of its historical development, and most distinctly in the highest culminating point - Christianity."⁵ Christianity is the most perfect religious and ethical system, the goal and crown of all other religions and ethical systems - Greek, Roman, Indian, Persian and Jewish.

The second conspicuous characteristic of Pfleiderer's system follows from the first one - the uniformity of the historical process. In this conception, God is manifested in the natural order of creation and history as well as in the heart of a man. But, God is not to be thought of in terms of a special divine intervention. On the contrary, God is to be discovered in the ordinary course of things, not in extraordinary events. It may be asked: What of the claims of special interventions, particularly the miraculous incursions?

5. Ibid., p.167.

Pfleiderer considers the growth and decline of faith in miracles. Miraculous legends are the form in which man's infant faith in God finds sensible expression. Their growth is inevitable in the first stages of religion. Myth, legend, and poetical fables, are the thoughts of man's religious childhood. "Myths and legends are the original forms in which man's impulse to find his place in the world sought to satisfy itself; and, out of them, proceeded the cosmologies which everywhere form the beginnings of a philosophical explanation of the world. But, as secular morality, with the progress of civilisation, separated itself from religion, so, in like manner, the impulse towards knowledge did not feel itself permanently satisfied by the traditional legends... From the need of embodying the first guesses at truth in concrete pictures...spring these miraculous legends, in which historical processes become idealised into images and types of spiritual experiences which always repeat themselves in the life of pious souls, or in which supersensible truths, ideas and ideals spring from the inner world of the spirit, become realised in symbolical

processes of the external world."6. Pfleiderer says that those who deny the reality of miracles will be asked to explain the rise and meaning of belief in them. He traces that belief to two courses - the idealising of the real and the realising of the ideal. Men either heighten and glorify objects of outward experience, or they embody visions and ideas of their mind in fictitious histories. The history of all the higher religions, and, in particular, of Christianity, is rich in examples of such miraculous histories in which the historical understanding can perceive nothing but a poetic realising of religious ideas. These ideal events are necessary and true for the time, that is, true as husks and vestures of ideas. On this reckoning, miracle stories, e.g. the transfiguration, the resurrection, Pentecost, the miraculous birth, etc., are idealising creations of religious fantasy working on the materials of memory and tradition. On psychological and literary grounds, viz. religious experiences of the disciples, the existing Messianic idea and the literal interpretation of the Old Testament, these occurrences which had made a deep and lasting impression, not merely on

6. Ibid., p.71 - 81.

individuals, but on whole circles of religiously excited men, became involuntarily idealised, even on the occasion of their being perceived by the first eye-witnesses, and still more in their reconciliation of them.

But, it may be asked in this context: Does Pfleiderer's theory of the miraculous and mythic embellishments of the narrative allow sufficient time for this activity? Does the involuntary idealisation of the narratives take place in the time span which Pfleiderer assigns to this heightening process, especially when it is noted that he places the composition of the Gospel of Mark in the year 70 A.D.? Pfleiderer would, perhaps, answer these questions along the following line of reasoning: There was not the separation in the minds of the first century between the boundaries of the present world and the next. Even in the oneness of the two worlds there was no particular miracle in their minds when a person like Jesus was believed to have risen again. But, more of the implications of Pfleiderer's philosophy in our evaluations.

2. Evaluations of Pfleiderer's Theology:

What have we learned about our discussion of

history from this cursory glance at Pfleiderer's thought? We may summarise our points in the following way: (1) Historical facts are mere shell and husk, i.e. "venerable vestments of sublime truths."⁷ Abstract ideas are the kernel of historical events. (2) Philosophy takes over from religion in the interpretation of Christianity. The division between Vorstellung and Begriff, between image and form, which was made in Hegel's and Strauss' philosophy, is continued and buttressed in Pfleiderer's system. In line with Strauss, Pfleiderer's picture of the "mythless" Christ is one which magnifies His perfect and moral life. This picture can be detected in the following description given to it by Pfleiderer: "The religious and the moral motives stood in His (Jesus) case in the purest harmony and in the most fruitful reciprocity...the deepest truth which Jesus impressed for the first time on humanity, and with a power such as no one else ever did, is this - Die and live again. Thou findest salvation nowhere but in the unconditional and unreserved surrender of thy whole self to God and His will of goodness. The soul of man, the child of God, cannot find rest and satisfaction in the perishing ungodly nature of the world; nor is it practicable to divide the heart between Mammon and God, as the Holy Ghost will have the whole man."⁸ (3) A separation is postulated

7. Ibid., p.95.

8. Ibid., Vol.II. Chapter 3, p.90.

between Paul and Jesus. Pfleiderer represents Paul as the creator of Christian theology, the author of dogmatic Christianity. As most of Paul's ideas, e.g. doctrines of atonement and justification, his hellenistic mythological Christology, etc., are rooted in the 'juristic theology of Phariseeism,' they 'can no longer claim any binding authority over us.' Instead of attempting an interpretation of these Pauline ideas, Pfleiderer simply strips from the Gospel those which his philosophical system will accept.

(4) Christianity is to be appreciated as giving birth to some timeless, eternal and general truths.

Our critique, and, for that matter, our exposition of Pfleiderer's system could be more involving, but we do not want to side-track our general discussion and survey of 19th century trends. We are considering another aspect of history, i.e. the organic, developing nature of historical ideas, and it is merely our purpose to reveal some of the theological tension toward the close of the 19th and in the early decades of the 20th century. In some measure, Troeltsch and Pfleiderer on the one hand, and Ritschl and Herrmann on the other, represent in their theologies the many-sided facets in the 19th century.

For example: The Hegelian-Straussian emphasis on development of ideas is, with some exceptions, made one of the foundation stones in Troeltsch's and Pfleiderer's system. In these men, philosophy again plays its function in their theological constructions. But, in view of the reactions in the century to Hegelianism and all such philosophical theology by those in search of the "facts" which lay behind the theological portraits of the Christ in the New Testament and in Christian history, the theologies at the turn of the century were forced to reckon with the "particular", "concrete", i.e., Jesus of Nazareth, happenings in history. But, while Troeltsch and Pfleiderer were not confined to the exclusive revelation in Jesus, as were Ritschl and Herrmann, they could not give an adequate portrait of Jesus on the basis of their Philosophical biases.

We find ourselves, seemingly, at a cross-road at the close of the century - and there are many ways of describing the alternatives lying before us. First, the Hegelian-Straussian-Troeltschian-Pfleidererian trend in the century, despite their efforts in correlating history and faith, history and myth, fact and development, displaced the concrete in preference for the idea. This line of reasoning considers the core of Christianity to lie

in the idea and not in any historic person. Another Hegelian in the 20th century states the trend in the following succinct manner: Edward Caird says in his Gifford Lectures on "The Evolution of Religion": "The first and last word of Christianity is the unity of reconciliation of the human and the divine"⁹.....In another characteristic passage he writes: "As in its first dawn, Christianity is again beginning to show itself...as a principle at once subjective and objective which reveals itself not only within but also without us, which is immanent in nature and in man, and which is working in him to still higher issues. But, this lesson, wrapped up at the dawn of Christianity in types and symbols borrowed from an earlier faith, and apprehended only by feeling or, at best, by an imaginative intuition which had no means of explaining itself, is now becoming a reasoned conviction which can understand and criticise its own nature and evidence. The principle of Christianity has come to self-consciousness, and it is, therefore, capable of being held without that admixture of illusion which was inevitable in an earlier age."¹⁰ Canon Quick's

9. Caird, Edward, "The Evolution of Religion" - Vol.II, p.291, quoted by Quick, O.C., "Liberalism, Modernism and Tradition" - p.40.

10. Ibid., p.41.

incisive comments on these remarks should be noted. "Thus it is really in the theological doctrine rather than in the historic person that Caird finds the true Christian principle. What fundamentally appeals to him is the idea of a general law of divine incarnation and human redemption through self-sacrifice everywhere working itself out, rather than the fact of the human goodness of the man Jesus. Thus, the truth of Christianity is translated into a principle of idealist philosophy which the man Jesus intuitively perceived and expressed in mythological form."¹¹ In the next section of our exposition, we shall follow up this particular point of view in one of its most persuasive exponents in the 20th century- the late Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple.

Meanwhile, the other alternative in the 19th century should be focused. This trend, as we have noted, began with the "Lives of Jesus" in the middle of the century and culminated in the theological formulation of the Ritschlians. In essence, Christianity consists in reconstructing the actual historic facts of the life and teaching of Jesus, and in the individual's

11. Ibid., p.42.

approach to those facts. The facts and the individual's faith which sees in them a gospel, these are the only abiding essentials of Christianity; these remain the same, a distinguishable substratum below all the passing systems of theology and ecclesiastical order which are, at best, like husks preserving a kernel, at worst, like grubs which eat into its heart. "Liberal Protestantism," as this point of view has been termed by many writers, sought to limit God, as it were, to the historic Jesus. While its disparagement of speculative dogma and metaphysical attempts to formulate the Christian faith in a once-for-all system was damaging in one direction, i.e., determining the ultimacy and cosmic significance of the Christian faith, the Ritschlian polemic drove theologians in this century to investigate history and its bearing upon the Christian faith. One of the theologians that we shall want to give some attention to in our next section has phrased the importance of the "historical" in the following words: "The old Christological struggle has been transformed into a struggle about a Christian or a half pagan interpretation

of history: whether the Kingdom of God or a national kingdom is the centre of history and principle of meaning for every historical activity with respect to the kingdom of God. These questions replace the old question as to the relationship of these two natures in Christ."¹². D.M. Baillie expresses modern theology's debt to the 'Jesus of History' movement in the following manner: "The present situation in Christology is one which could not have emerged before the 'Jesus of History' movement, but only after it."¹³.

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12. Tillich, Paul, "Interpretation of History" - p.261.
13. Baillie, D.M. "God was in Christ" - p.9.

PART THREE

SOME TWENTIETH CENTURY EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THEOLOGICAL
PROBLEMS.

SECTION III.

SOME 20th CENTURY EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS.PREFACE.

In view of our idealogical survey of the two basic trends in 19th century theology, i.e., the movement away from history in the Hegelians and the return to history in the 'liberals' and Ritschlians, we are prepared for the theological problems which must be considered in the 20th century. Obviously we cannot bring out each question and focus the answers given by 20th century theologians. We have outlined two discernible trends in the 19th century and these patterns, as we indicated in Troeltsch and Pfleiderer, were not as opposed as a surface reading of theology would have us believe. Instead of an initial movement away from history in the Hegelians and a return to history in the liberal Jesus pictures and in the Ritschlian school, we are faced with various shades of the relationship between faith and history, between objective facts and some interpretation of these facts in the 19th century. It is the major emphases of the two views which allow for any separate discussion. In a simplified estimate of the 19th century, we have, it would appear, the controversy between Athens and Jerusalem, between Hellenism and Hebraism resurrected in the two schools of Idealism and phenomenalism or historicism. On the one hand, through relating

Christianity and other disciplines and endeavouring to give Christianity a cosmic and ultimate setting, the particularities associated with Christianity, e.g. events, pictures, images, doctrines, were absorbed or clarified conceptually in the higher discipline of philosophy. Theology was submerged in philosophy. In the higher regions of thought, a divorce could be made between the pictorial presentations and the abiding, eternal qualities or ideas inherent in these portraits, but realisable when the images were eliminated. On the other hand, the ethico-religious interest and the desire to clothe Christianity with the sort of objectivity which had become respected in the empirical sciences and, moreover, with the purpose of investigating the Christian message and freeing it from the prevailing criticisms of illusionism and subjectivism, the particulars of the Christian faith became the starting point and the objective facts, unadorned by later philosophical and doctrinal embellishments, constituted the sure rock amidst the storms of doubt and confusion. We have briefly surveyed these efforts to recapture the "real" Jesus behind the obscure and rigid forms. This Jesus did not emerge in his virginal purity. If he did relinquish his place in world history, it was through a projection of the images attached to Him by those who would

rehabilitate Him in all his pristine historicity. Moreover, this rehabilitation process, this search for the Jesus behind the Christ - however valueable in estimating Jesus' humanity - sacrificed or underestimated the very things in the New Testament picture of the Christ, e.g., his paradoxical relationship to God and man, which gave Him ultimacy and finality. In Tillich's terminology, the Christ character of Jesus was undermined in the liberal formulations.

The century closed with efforts to move away from this "objectified" Jesus picture. In Herrmann, the processes of the Christian faith were explicated. From the present significance of the appearance of Jesus in the realm of history and in contemporary significance of the inner life of Jesus, the Christian communes with God. Unlike some, or most, of his colleagues and liberal predecessors, faith for Wilhelm Herrmann could not be based on a belief in the occurrence of probable historical events or the assent to ecclesiastical doctrines. From the present relevance of the Christ-event in and through the experience of communion with God, the past facts and questionable interpretations receive understanding and clarification.

We found reason to question Herrmann's ambiguous handling of history. He wanted, it would seem, to

declare the events objective and factual in every way - as being on par with other events - and yet, he wanted to say that faith does not rest on the believing of certain factual happenings. We had cause to remark that Herrmann considered these "objective events", as did Albrecht Ritschl, as suprahistorical. That is to say, these sacred events were in a realm to themselves, subject to, and yet free from, historical criticism. The suprahistorical facts were separate from and above and beyond ordinary historical happenings. While desiring to historicise man's communion with God, Herrmann and others perpretrated the natural and supernatural duality in a different guise, i.e., historical and suprahistorical. Some type of metaphysic of history and Christianity was inherent in these theologies, though to be sure, the theologians desired nothing more than the complete elimination of speculative theology.

Ernst Troeltsch set himself the task of correcting this ecclesiastical interpretation of history. With his radical understanding of the historical method and its applicability to all ideas and occurrences, he sought to show that within the realm of history, all problems must be solved. But, our brief survey of his thought, while emphasising the homogeneousness

of history, e.g. all of one piece with no supernatural or suprahistorical realm beyond, revealed Troeltsch's slight interest in Christian history or in relating Christian history to world history. He seemed to be too engaged in apprehending the meaning of history in general to give any attention to the meaning of Christian history in particular. When Christian history was related to 'history', it seemed to be done on a philosophical level. While not explicit in our survey, we had reason to believe, despite Troeltsch's emphasis on the individual appropriation of the mystical experience of faith, that he sacrificed history in its particular character to the Idea of history. In other words, he gave a metaphysical interpretation of history which departed from the eventfulness of history. Our view of Troeltsch appears to be substantiated in an evaluation given by Gogarten in his book "Demythologizing and History". Gogarten writes: "It is no doubt Troeltsch who, as a theologian troubled by the immensely difficult problem of the relation between faith and history, has studied the problem of history in its most comprehensive aspects. He was determined to be guided by his conviction that the real problem of history 'arises from the

inner nature of history itself as soon as it has been consciously seen to be history' and that consequently it is only in the nature of history itself that a solution for these problems can be found. As a result of his detailed examination of historical thought, he comes to the surprising conclusion that the key for the solution of the problems which this thought raises is 'the essential and individual identity of finite minds with the infinite mind, and, precisely through this, their intuitive participation in its concrete contents and its motivated vital unity.' Even if one says, as Troeltsch does, that this identity of finite minds with the infinite can be 'only a very conditional one,' it is still not difficult to perceive that modern historical thought, in taking over this idea as the solution for the problem of the philosophy of history which it involves and consequently also as the initial basis for its understanding of history, is in fact departing from history and seeking refuge in metaphysics. It thus robs of its proper significance and force the realisation that history is in itself the problem which embraces the whole of human reality, man's own reality as well as that of his world."¹.

1. Gogarten, Friedrich, "Demythologizing and History" - p.32.

In the 20th century we are troubled with the interpretation of history, and, according to Dr. John Macquarrie, the term history is subject to many interpretations. "Here we have a term (history) frequently used by theologians but rarely examined and subjected to that ontological analysis which we saw to be the prerequisite to clear theological thinking."² We are not, it may be said in this context, intent on defining the term 'history' or 'myth'. Our purpose is to describe the ways in which these ambiguous terms are used by certain philosophers and theologians. The problem of the historical interpretation of Christianity, according to a 20th century theologian, who has made an effort to elucidate it in his book, "is to grasp the Christian faith once more in its original historical character, to allow it to be historical so that it once more enables the history of God to be what it is, and thus enables the history to take place in itself (an sich) instead of conceiving it (sich vorstellen) in accordance with the subject-object pattern....That is the meaning and purpose of demythologization - to interpret the mythical form (Gestalt), which is found in a number of formulations (central ones) in the New Testament message, in such a way that the

2. Macquarrie, John, "Existentialist Theology" -
p.160.

history is perceived to which alone they are intended to bear witness."³ The question in dispute between Bultmann and his opponents, according to Gogarten, "is not whether the great acts of God 'are set before all human existence, indestructibly, indissolubly and irremovably.' For this is affirmed by both sides, and, indeed, with no less determination by the 'demythologizing' party than by their opponents. The question in debate, the question which must therefore be decided, is rather, how - in what way - the history of God precedes all the being and doing of man. On the one side it is asserted that it is in the way of 'objective factualness', while on the other side it is asserted that, since God's action takes place in the destiny of a concrete historical man and is accordingly a unique historical event, it comes before man as that which is set before his existence in the Kerygma of the New Testament."⁴

3. Gogarten, op. cit., p.67.

4. Ibid., p.68. (In the passage we have two uses of 'history'. This is not surprising because, in German, there are two terms, Geschichte and Historie. The former means historical reality which, even though it is past, makes a continuous impact upon present experience. The latter refers to the scientific study of history).

We have allowed Gogarten to phrase the question which seems foremost in the 20th century, and the question which Bultmann and others have addressed themselves to, primarily, because we will want to understand how Bultmann answers this question. But, before we can isolate a few of the problems which Bultmann raises in his theology, especially his "demythologizing" of the New Testament, we shall want to glance at William Temple's philosophy and Christology. In our opinion, Temple's theology is particularly qualified to mirror the theological ambiguities discernible in the 19th century. He attempts, as a mediating theologian, to do justice to two emphases in his theology, i.e., his liberal heritage through the Ritschlian school, and his idealistic (Platonic and Hegelian) sympathies are focused in his natural theology and in his efforts to allow the Christology springing from this emphasis to correct the historicism of the Ritschlians.

In our second chapter, we are interested in Bultmann's approach to 'history' and 'myth'. Bultmann's "demythologizing" scheme will be compared with David Friedrich Strauss' "demythologized" Christianity. We shall give particular

attention to the two criteria which both theologians use in their separate interpretations of myth in the New Testament. Our question being: Does Bultmann's demythologizing of the Christian message utilise the scientific and philosophical world view of the 20th century as a criterion for the truth contained in the Christian message, or does he allow the modern world view to criticise the mythological world view of the Bible? We shall see how crucial this question is when we sketch Strauss' elimination of myth on the grounds that nothing can be admitted as historical which conflicts with the conclusions of science and the view of philosophy (Hegelian) which regulates his understanding of the New Testament. We shall elucidate our understanding of Bultmann's description of 'myth' and 'history' in the New Testament in the following way. Firstly, we shall give an initial comparison of Strauss and Bultmann's demythologizing efforts. Secondly, for purposes of comparison and contrast, we will recapitulate the Straussian approach to myth in the New Testament and his interpretation of history. Thirdly, we will describe Bultmann's use of myth and his understanding of the role of science and philosophy as guides

instead of norms for the interpretation of myth in the New Testament.

While Bultmann's approach to 'history' will be implicit in the foregoing treatment of his thought, we shall want to make his interpretation of history more explicit by comparing him and his approach to the 'historical' with his Marburg teacher, Wilhelm Herrmann. Herrmann was, according to Bultmann, "struggling (even if he does so with an inadequate body of abstract categories) to comprehend human being as 'being-in-history'."⁵

We believe that Bultmann's understanding of 'myth' and 'history' is subject to a theological criticism which was levelled against the Ritschlians, viz. his renunciation of one of the essential tasks of theology, which is to speak of God, albeit symbolically. Bultmann's dismissal of cosmic symbolism in his theology, including some aspects of Christology, impoverishes the place of Christ and his relationship to Creation.

It is at this point where a description of Paul Tillich's view of symbol and the place of myth in the Christian message exercises a necessary

5. Bultmann, Rudolf, "Essays: Philosophical and Theological" - (The Problem of Hermeneutics) - page 260.

corrective. Our evaluation of Bultmann's theology through a clarification of Tillich's understanding of symbols will serve to illumine the defect we believe present in Bultmann, and, at the same time, we shall have before us a theology which attempts to correlate the ethico-religious (the existential self-understanding of the Christian message) and the ontological roots of the message, i.e. Being and the self-manifestation of Being in Jesus the Christ.

But, in our first chapter we are concerned to illustrate, as we pointed out, two emphases, i.e., idealism and historicism, which lie uncorrelated in William Temple's philosophy and Christology. Temple's theology should caution us against expecting some type of resolvment or synthesis of the prevailing trends in the 19th century.

There are two theological types which affirm God's self-revelation under the conditions of humanity, and the historical or idealistic type which emphasizes Jesus' response to "the Father who called Him at His baptism, and began His Messianic work."

A philosophical background to Temple's Christology may be found in his collected lectures, "Nature, God and Man". While Temple's philosophy will not be dealt with extensively in our study, there will be certain ideas which we shall want to discuss in connection with the Christology.

L. B. G. Temple, "Christus Veritas" - p. 157.

CHAPTER I.

"Christus Veritas": The Christology of William Temple.

1. Introduction:

William Temple's Christology and his interpretation of history may form a bridge into the 20th century, and his ideas have the possibility of focusing many of the problems which are being discussed in this century. We turn to Temple for two reasons: Firstly, his interpretation of history represents the two ideas of history which we have discussed in the late 19th century. These two thoughts, i.e., an emphasis on the organic nature of ideas and their development and a concern for the initial data of the Christian message, are in conflict in his theology. Secondly, there is a conflict in his Christology represented by his anxiety to do justice to two types of Christology, i.e., the mythological type which affirms God's manifestation under the conditions of humanity,¹ and the historical or adoptionist type which emphasises Jesus' response to "the Voice that hailed Him at His baptism...to begin the Messianic work."²

A philosophical background to Temple's Christology may be found in his Gifford lectures, "Nature, Man and God". While Temple's philosophy will not be dealt with extensively in our essay, there will be certain ideas which we shall want to discuss in connection with his Christology.

1. Temple, William, "Christus Veritas" - p.139.
 2. Ibid., p.121.

"Christus Veritas" is a serious attempt to re-think the whole problem of the Person of Christ and to re-interpret His significance for modern man. Temple realised, so he informs us in the preface of this work, that the idea of God which contemporary philosophy reaches precluded His ever doing anything in particular in any sense than that in which He does everything in general. In order to make special revelation intelligible to the mind of his day, Temple presents an exposition of the Christian idea of God, life and the world, or, in his own words, "a Christo-centric metaphysics."³ He confesses that this "map of the world"⁴ is given with the Christian revelation presupposed from the outset. This early work carries through more fully the implications of his closing affirmation in his later Gifford lectures: that in Christ the full revelation of God has been bestowed which meets our sorest need.

A further word of introduction and we shall present the basic thesis of the book and attempt to appraise his ideas. Temple admits that this work "is an essay, not a treatise - a sketch, not a picture."⁵ With this in mind, we shall not expect him to spell out completely his philosophical and theological ideas.

3. Ibid., p.5.

4. Ibid., p.6.

5. Ibid., p.10.

For that matter, his earlier work, "Mens Creatrix", so he informs us, sets forth his philosophic view, while his later work, his magnum opus, "Nature, Man and God" presents his thought in a more expanded and developed form. Because Temple's thought is too completely one for consideration of any one aspect of it in isolation, we will, in places where his argument is strengthened and clarified in these two writings, refer to some of his related ideas.

Before embarking on our main discussion, which will be a consideration of his Christology and an implicit evaluation of his interpretation of history, some brief consideration must be given to the overall structure of his argument in "Christus Veritas".

2. Philosophical Backgrounds.

Temple says for purposes of exposition, he found it better to work in from the circumference to the heart of the Christian position, and then out again. The divisions in his Christological treatise reveal the fact that he works from the periphery toward the centre, finds Christ to be the centre, then pushes out into the world suffused with His power. Turning to his later work, "Nature, Man and God", we discover Temple's thought on his so-called "outer circle".

After understanding his point of departure in considering the revelation of God in Jesus the Christ, we may move to the Christological reconstruction in his "Christus Veritas".

On the basis of the harmony between the Mind of Man and the rest of the universe, the inference is made that the universe is rational. According to Temple, "there is throughout the World a system of inter-relations such that each separate entity affects, and is affected by, all other things."⁶ He saw reality existing in degrees, or stratas. Matter, life, mind and spirit - this is the hierarchy he envisages in an unbroken continuity in evolution. The relation between the degrees is explained by Temple in a hierarchial manner. "Every grade in reality finds its own fulfillment when it is possessed by a higher grade and that each higher grade uses those which are lower than itself for its expression."⁷ Temple, while not mentioning the term in this work, is convinced of a process which may be called "emergent evolution" - a continuity in the world process.

The most significant episode in the process is the emergence of Mind. Though this appears late in the

6. "Nature, Man and God" - p.504.

7. "Christus Veritas" - p.147.

evolutionary scheme of things, this does not rule out the immanency and latency of the principle. From this point Temple moves on to his first dialectical transition. Mind is a part of nature, then Nature (to contain such a part) must be grounded in Mind. In short, we are compelled to assert the reality of a supernatural Creator."⁸.

Temple's dialectical transitions - matter, life, mind and spirit - establish the basis of his "sacramental" philosophy and theology. Through these transitions, the way is prepared to receive the concept of the Incarnation which is for him the crowning principle of the emergent process. Progress in Temple's system, according to him, consists in the predominance at each state in the process of the sacramental higher principle. The emergent process culminates in the Incarnation, an act of God, but inferable as necessary from the structure of reality; and, from the Incarnation there stems the Church, the spirit-bearing body. In his thought, it is contended that even without revelation one can infer the Incarnation as the final stage in the process, provided that you accept his doctrine of degrees of reality as an account of the world. He remarks in his "Christus Veritas": "Even had there been no evil in the world to overcome, no sin to be

8. "Nature, Man and God" - p.134.

abolished and forgiven, still the Incarnation would be the natural inauguration of the final state of evolution. In this sense, the Incarnation is perfectly intelligible; that is to say, we can see that its occurrence is all of a piece with the scheme of Reality."⁹.

Though Temple says the Incarnation and the relation of Deity to humanity in Christ remain beyond our understanding, this statement is vitiated by his attempts to subordinate the revelation in Christ to a particular world view. In his scheme of Reality, Temple seems to make revealed knowledge of Him to be found in the universe as such. Possibly we might digress at this point to discuss Temple's essay "Revelation and its Mode" in his book "Nature, Man, and God". We shall give some attention to his effort to harmonise Natural and Revealed Theology.

3. "Revelation and its Mode":

The purpose of Temple's essay is stated in a question which he poses near the beginning of his discussion. He asks..."how far they (these forms religious people have supposed that special revelation to have taken) are philosophically justifiable, and what are the conditions of a fully

9. "Christus Veritas" - p.139.

satisfactory revelation?" This statement of purpose is augmented by another word coming at the conclusion of his essay. He writes..."it is very much the business of Natural Theology to describe the mode of Revelation which is consonant with the conclusions which on other grounds are found to be most probable concerning the nature of God and of His relation to men." His philosophical world view - evolutionary transitions through matter, life, mind, spirit and culminating in a Personal Self-expression - establish both the universe to be rational and personal in nature. But, what can we say concerning Revelation, especially particular Revelation on the basis of this evolutionary hypothesis? How does Temple, assuming the role of a Natural Theologian and accepting the role of the Christian faith in advance, pretend to make special revelation intelligible in the framework of Natural Theology? What does he accept as conditions of a fully satisfactory special Revelation - a revelation which is supposed to be free of indefiniteness and vagueness?

Temple believes that, unless all existence is a medium of Revelation, no particular revelation is possible. On the basis of this affirmation, he

attempts to prove that the conditions of the possibility of any revelation require that there should be nothing which is not revelation. God is personal, and acting personally, God can break the supposed "normal uniform" process. These breaks or variations in the uniformity of God's actions do not invalidate His constancy; rather, these adaptations enhance the constancy of the Personal Divine character. The argument of the "infinite adjustability" of God to present conditions, supported by the fact that a personal God can only be adequately revealed in and through persons, and supplemented by the thought that all existence is revelation, establishes the possibility of particular revelations. With this in view, Temple proceeds to set up the conditions of a fully satisfactory "special Revelation".

His criticisms of Biblical and Creedal revelations and his positive statements concerning the nature of the revelations to be derived from these formulae deserve thoughtful attention. Despite the general argument of the essay, these evaluations of the traditional modes of revelation are enough to make his thoughts outstanding in contemporary theology.

Temple's discussion of the traditionally conceived means of Revelation breaks the ground for his primary conception of Revelation, Revelation, according to Temple, comes through and in an event to minds divinely illuminated to appreciate the significance of God's eventful action. God guides the universe and the minds of men. The interaction of the process and the minds of men is the essence of Revelation. Though God's uniform process of the world can be revelatory for the minds alert to its significance, the specially adapted activities for meeting certain contingencies provide a fuller revelation of God. "All therefore is alike revelation, but not all is equally revelatory of the Divine character." The special Revelation chooses its own occasions and what is offered to man's apprehension in any specific Revelation is not truth concerning God, but the living God Himself.

Temple realises that those special activities of God (objective self-utterances) require responses from within us, and these responses are themselves the movement in us of the Divine Spirit. Does this establish a mode of Revelation consonant with the conclusions Natural Theology finds on other grounds to be the most probable concerning God and His relation to men? I think not, and sections of his

essay give me reason to believe that Temple did not believe he had taken the risk quality out of special revelation. The pinnacle of his argument concerning the conditions or modes which particular Revelation must take to be declared philosophically sound, is reached when he writes: "But, if the contention of the last lecture is sound, and Divine Immanence is always and only the activity of a transcendent Personality, and operates after the manner of personal action, by infinitely various adjustments which exhibit constancy of character in the face of varied situations, then there is no need for any dividing line, nor any possibility of drawing one." Though Temple posits a quantitative correlation between general and special knowledge of God, making the latter an extension in a straight line of the former, and though he assumes that God can manifest himself in a particular manner, and though he attempts to root special Revelation in the rational coherence of the world, he does not, particularly in the role of a Natural Theologian, come to grips with what he is trying to avoid in the essay, namely, to absolve special revelation of its indefiniteness and vagueness and to establish rational standards

whereby God's special events can be measured. He betrays this fact in several places in his discussion. It is possible to criticise Temple's views on Revelation from many sides, but we will utilise his own criticisms; for, in them, he exhibits the fact that the Christian faith, though not constructively, has served a regulative function in his presentation.

The primary place where Temple undermines his logical argument is in the question he asks in the closing paragraphs of the essay. He asks: "The question still remains - By what means does the Revelation authenticate itself? From the nature of the case it must offer its own credentials; that revelation should have to appeal to anything beside itself to establish its character as revelation would be patent absurdity." This point is augmented in at least two other places in the discussion. First, in his critique of the Bible he acknowledges that the theory of God's mechanical dictation of truth is wholly without parallel or analogy in the normal relationship between God and man and even contradictory of that relationship. Though he admits that such a departure is unwarranted and unacceptable, he nevertheless says

that the conveyance of God's knowledge is a matter of import so transcendent and an activity of love so characteristic that it must be regarded as offering an adequate occasion as any could ever be for a departure from normal procedure. In other words, he has discredited the propositional revelation in the Bible but he has not denied that God can act apart from the logical coherence of the world. Men cannot, according to Temple, calculate the actions of God. God's word is cradled in the Bible, but this does not rule out the fact that He can manifest Himself arbitrarily and uniquely apart from our preconceptions. How does this view coincide with his Natural Theology? Though he acknowledges occasions for God's unusual unplanned activity, the possibility that the activity, or the interpretation of the event, can deviate from normal procedure and logical predictability does not seem to be carried through to a logical conclusion in his essay on Revelation. Granted the fact that he posits the variability of God, this adaptability of God is magnified to a place beyond the logical constancy set forth in his argument. Why does Temple hesitate and qualify God's actions? Granted that he did not take man's alienation from God seriously, but when a personal revelation of God appears under the conditions of

existential separation apart from the normal procedure, why does Temple not come out boldly and say that this revelation may seem strange and contradictory to all human standards and experience? Instead of this paradoxical thought, Temple hedges the issue and surrenders the uniqueness of special revelation to a philosophy which demands proof and logical validation of God's revelation.

Second, following his views on eventful revelation, he acknowledges that there are truths of revelation. That is to say, there are propositions which express the results of correct thinking concerning revelation. But, he says that these truths do not involve the result that there need be anything vague or indefinite about revelation itself. The locus, according to Temple, is not in the mind, but the historical event. On two scores, Temple's thought in this context should be examined. In the first place, he attempts to safeguard the objectivity of the Christian Revelation, but, in so doing, he obscures and oversimplifies the problem. In an effort to maintain the definiteness of Revelation, he dichotomises the event and the interpretation of the event. When he attempts to preserve the objectivity of the facts themselves, as existing independently of the thinking

and prejudices of the believer, he overlooks one vital factor in Biblical Revelation. That is, that we can know of the event (Jesus Christ) only through the written and interpreted history of Revelation. Secondly, Temple's error at this point is further mirrored by the way we apprehend the objective event. God's direct self-communication to the soul of man establishing the appreciation of the event illumines the subjective character of God's revealing act. There is no subjectivity in the event as such, only our acception or rejection of the event. The event is free from indefiniteness - coming to us divested of its irrational character. Natural Theology may sympathise with his emphasis on the factual, empirical character of the event, but his ideas on the Divinely initiated response are dissonant with his conclusion about God, man and the world. Alan Richardson makes a point in this connection in his "Christian Apologetics". Temple's emphasis on the objective event and the subjective appreciation and incorporation links him, according to Richardson, with the Ritschlian concern for the factual account of the event narrated in the New Testament. Richardson believes that the event and the interpretation of the event are so joined even in the New Testament that the fact and the

appreciation cannot be separated and designated "objective" and "subjective" as the Ritschlian school of thought attempted to do.¹⁰

Temple tried and failed to harmonise Natural and Revealed Theology. Revelation in the process becomes subordinated to reason. The assumption of the unity of revelation and reason, or placing all revelation on the same plane with nothing more than a quantitative distinction between the two, tends to deprive the special revelation of finality. The very fact that he believes that special revelation is in the same dimension or scale as general revelation - with a degree of distinction between the two, serves to defeat his general argument, even from the point of view of a Natural Theologian. It would seem that Revelation ceases to be an encounter with a Thou which authenticates itself on its own inherent grounds.

But, we may clarify our evaluation of Temple's ideas on Revelation by returning to other facets of his thought, particularly his view of the Incarnation.

10. Richardson, Alan, "Christian Apologetics" - pages 145-147.

4. The Incarnation and Emergent Evolution:

Our discussion to this point has shown that the Christian faith provides the spectacles through which Temple views reality and through which the truth of things can be seen. But, Temple's ambiguous formulation of revelation and its relationship to reason gave us cause to reflect on the adequacy of his understanding of "special revelation". By attempting to state the logical predictability of the Incarnation and endeavouring to fit the Incarnation into a nicely worked out theory of emergent evolution, Temple has lessened the uniqueness and the sui-genri nature of the revelation in Christ. In his concern for the continuity between man and God, Temple has harmonised general and special revelation to such a degree that the latter cannot be but an extension along the same lines of the former. This assumption deprives the "special revelation" of its concreteness, oneness and oneness. On this basis, one may know special revelation as differing in degree from general knowledge, but the former lacks any qualitative transcendence or final authenticity. One can sympathise with a statement made in his essay on Revelation in Baillie's symposium by the same name -

("The particular Christian revelation has its roots in the rational coherence of the world and, if these are separated, the special revelation becomes itself a superstition and a fruitful source of superstitions."¹¹) But, when the special character of the event is taken into a philosophy which abolishes its otherness, then we may question Temple's concern for the analogies preceding the special activity of God. Certainly, one can believe in a positive relation between revelation and reason without giving revelation a subordinate place in the relationship and bringing revelation into the argument at the end in order to add an additional corroboration to an already completed rational system. We may legitimately ask: "Why cannot the truths derived from revelation be accepted as a link in the argument on the basis of their own inherent authority?" Instead of borrowing practically the entire content of the Christian revelation under the illusion that he is coming to Christian conclusions solely through a rational process, why does Temple hesitate to introduce these revelatory truths on their own grounds?

The theory of emergent evolution might be satisfactory in an explanation of the various levels of reality in our world, but the fact of the

11. Baillie, John, "Revelation" - p.97.

Incarnation of God (however understood) appearing in the man Jesus is in another category and cannot be reduced to the confines of a rational theory. One may be impressed with the continuity between the levels of reality in nature and man, but one cannot suppose there exists this same continuity between sinful humanity and God. This relationship is assumed in Temple's exposition, and, because of this assumption, little evidence of the sense of the tragic element in the life of man and very little sign of questioning, doubt, struggle, wrestling and anguish of the soul are mirrored in Temple's "Christus Veritas". We are led from one point to another, and quite easily, on the way to a conclusion already familiar to the writer. It is agreed that man's reason should test Christian revelation and seek to explain it to human experience, but Temple fails to point out that man's reason is affected by pride the same as his other powers, and is also in need of enlightenment and redemption. Therefore, it is not revelation that must be obedient to reason, but reason to revelation. Man's reason is never qualified to stand in judgment over revelation, rather, the revelation is always judging man's reason, rather than fitting into

12. "Christus Veritas" - p.159.

13. "Thoughts in War-Time" - p.101.

its logical coherence.

Another point, related to his statement on the Incarnation, which will be considered in detail when we discuss his Christology, concerns what Temple's attempt to explain and reconcile special revelation does to his views on the Work of Christ. From the statement, "even had there been no evil in the world to overcome, no sin to be abolished and forgiven, still the Incarnation would be the natural inauguration of the final stage of evolution,"¹² we may surmise that Temple is Abelardian in his doctrine of the atonement. That is to say, he, along with Abelard and Ritschl, places a special emphasis on the revelation of God's love and its power to win men to repentance, though Temple's later writings reveal less of his earlier optimism. In 1940, in his essay, "Thoughts in Wartime", he realised more fully man's recalcitrance and God's sovereignty. He writes: "The task of presenting the special revelation seen in Christ is impracticable. The world of today is one of which no Christian map can be made. It must be changed by Christ into something very unlike itself before a Christian map of it is possible."¹³

Before considering Temple's Christology, one must admit that criticisms of Temple's thought arise

12. "Christus Veritas" - p.139.

13. "Thoughts in War-Time" - p.101.

today which would likely have been quite different twenty years ago. For one thing, his philosophy of emergent evolution has become suspect. His idealistic tendencies hindered him from seeing the critical situation caused by man's separation from God, and, because of this fallacy in his thought, his view of the Incarnation and the atonement lacks decisiveness and power.

5. Temple's Christology:

A. The Person of Christ:

Special attention has been given to Temple's claim that from a study of the various levels of reality we would expect God to supervene upon mankind and express Himself through the conditions supplied by humanity, but more convincingly he argues that "evil or sin of the world in any case a problem worthy of divine solution, culminates in the self-will of man, demands a special act of the gracious God to redeem mankind."¹⁴ This divine act has occurred in the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. Since man could not save himself from the problem of sin and finitude, God appeared in a human life sharing the real experience of manhood and thus inserting a "saving influence" into the universal body of inter-related human beings.

14. "Christus Veritas" - p.261.

In our consideration of Temple's outer circle, i.e., his theory of evolution and the dialectical transitions culminating in the Incarnation, we have found much to question. But, when Temple expounds the Christian idea of the Godhead of Jesus Christ, the Person of Christ, and the Holy Spirit and the Church, he is again the Church theologian; one who was anxious to reconcile the liberal and Anglo-Catholic wings of British Theology. Several points are assumed by Temple in his Christological treatise. Primarily, he was not seriously affected by the latest historical criticisms. He believed the Fourth Gospel to be the work of John the son of Zebedee, and he accepted the Virgin Birth theory. Moreover, he believed the empirical (objective-factual) basis of the Christian faith was to be found in the New Testament. As we have remarked, he perpetuated the Ritschlian interest in the "objective" basis of the faith with a "subjective" evaluation.

B. Doctrine of the Trinity:

In "Christus Veritas", Temple declares that the best way to describe the Godhead is in terms of love. "God is love; therefore, He seeks Himself in an Other;

this seeking is the eternal generation of the Son, who is Himself the Other that is sought; the Son as the Divine Self-utterance is the agent of creation so that in Him all the universe is implicit; within the universe the Creator-Son lives a human life and dies and rises again, so declaring to the universe the nature of its Creator; thus He calls forth from finite spirits the love which is theirs because He made them, though by self-will they had obscured it - and the same love which the Son reveals to men and elicits from them everlastingly unites the Son to the Father; this is the Holy Spirit: and this whole complex of related spirits is the Supreme Value or Reality - the Love Divine."¹⁵ This idea of God as dynamic love rather than as a static monad provides the basis of Temple's explanation of the all-sufficiency of God within Himself, of the creation of the world and the coming of Jesus Christ in redemption. God is love; creation and redemption are manifestations of that love and the Holy Spirit awakens our responsive love to the outgoing love of the Father.

Temple utilises a second set of terms to describe the Trinity. He declares that the most modern way to explain it is in psychological terms of personality.

15. "Christus Veritas" - p.283.

He ventures this formulation: "The Godhead has three centres of one consciousness, yet each is God. God the Father is the ground of all Being; He comprehends eternity. God the Son or the world is God's self-manifestation in time, in Creation, and in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is a personal influence witnessing to Christ in the hearts of the believers. These three persons are co-equal in the unity of One spiritual Being."¹⁶ Temple's description of God as Personality and Person strike a note of anthropomorphism which he fails to connect with his thought that God is beyond the categories of person as personality. This is, among many, an illustration of the side-by-side nature of Temple's theology. That is to say, two opposing thoughts are enunciated without an effort to connect them, symbolically or logically.

C. Divinity of Christ:

Temple writes: "The Gospel tells a story of a human life but it is more than human, or super-human - it is divine. Most markedly as the human personality reaches its complete development being made perfect by suffering, it reveals itself as having never been the ultimate fact about this human life. Behind, working

16. Ibid., p.117.

through it, utterly expressed by it so far as human nature allowed, but transcending it as God transcends humanity, is found the Divine Word Himself."¹⁷. While Temple does not elaborate the Logos doctrine in this essay, he believed - witness his discussion in his "Readings on the Gospel of St. John" - that the Logos Idea was the central explanation of the Divinity of Christ. Jesus' Divinity was the eternal Word subsuming a human life within the orbit of His work. The Word has always had its Being within the Deity, but it is not the whole of the Deity. It is God's nature to reveal Himself and so the world is the arena of His revelation. The Logos is the ground of the existence of the world, but all existing things now exist in evil. Only Jesus is wholly in the Logos. Other things come to be through the Logos. The light that was in the Logos has always shone into the world, but in a special way in Jesus Christ. He was the "only begotten son of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Temple found it difficult to think of the Logos as sustainer of the world and at the same time a babe in the manger. He decided that it was absurd to think of God as ruling the world and weeping over Jerusalem at

17. Ibid., p.145-146.

the same time. Therefore, he answered the Nestorian difficulty by saying that there were two persons, God the Father, who ruled the world and God the Son who was in Jesus Christ. Temple writes: "Between the existence of the Son subject to human limitations in Jesus of Nazareth and the Son as progressively ordering the world according to the eternal purpose of the Father, there is not the same distinction as between the Eternal and temporal modes of the Divine."¹⁸. Temple gives a further word on the Nestorian question which opposes any idea of God giving up certain of His characteristics and reducing His divinity in order to become man. "The Incarnation does not mean that God the Son left His usual work of Creation and was active in Jesus. Jesus did not control affairs in Mars or China. But, God the Son, who is the Word of God by whom as agent all things come to be and apart from whom no single thing has come to be, without ceasing His creative and sustaining work, added this to it, that He became flesh and dwelt as in a tabernacle among us so that in Him we saw 'the glory as of the only-begotten Son of the Father'. He who is always God became also Man - not ceasing to be God the while. For the Incarnation was effected, not by conversion of the Godhead into

18. Ibid., p.280.

flesh but by taking of manhood into God."¹⁹.

Temple is anxious to steer clear of the Kenosis theory (reduction in the Godhead). He quotes H.R. Mackintosh's summary of the facts concerning this theory. Temple foresees a criticism that might be raised against his view, viz. that the Incarnation was merely an episode in the life of the Divine Son. Men could then say, "Oh, yes, He accepted suffering and death, but all the time He was God and knew He would soon return to His glory. Therefore, we cannot say that He was really one of us." Temple seeks to point out that God's true nature is revealed in the earthly life of Jesus and that the Incarnation is a revealing episode in the life of the Eternal Son.

In a later context, we shall want to point out how Temple's ideas on the union of the two natures in Christ jeopardises the Divinity of Christ.

D. Humanity of Christ:

The highest categories that we know in our world, according to Temple, are those of spirit and personality. However, Temple says, we believe that through our study of human beings and their appreciation of values,

19. Ibid., p.140.

there is a transcendent Deity who embodies these values and who, from our experience, must not be less than personal. In order to reveal Himself as all the other grades of reality do by supervening upon the next lower grade, we would expect Deity to appear in the form of human personality as it did in Jesus Christ. The Divine Person, the Eternal Word, was the controlling factor in that human life, but it was throughout a true and full humanity.

Though Temple indicates the points where Jesus was truly human as suggested by the Gospel narratives, and though he gives an excellent description of Jesus' sinlessness as connected with His growth and development, and though he presents the individuality and universality of Christ's humanity in a very convincing manner, there are at least two places in his discussion which tend to throw in question the humanity and jeopardise the true divinity of Christ. In the first instance, Temple is prepared to accept the Virgin Birth story. We believe that there is little excuse for basing Christ's divinity and sinlessness on this theory without a clear explanation why this particular doctrine occupies such a pre-eminent place. An acceptance of the Virgin birth hypothesis questions the full humanity of Jesus and tends toward a presentation of a Docetic Christ.

The other point, Christ's relationship to other men, does not make clear how Christ was different from other men. Temple sought to maintain a view of the continuity between Christ and other men. We believe this relationship to be fundamentally sound, but we would, on the basis of Temple's evolutionary treatment of Christianity, want to question his treatment of the dissimilarity between Christ and other men. The only difference, according to Temple, between Christ and other men was Christ's constant obedience to the will of God. It would appear from Temple's thought, that Christ is merely our perfect example. His acts and deeds evoke sympathy and love for our neighbour and free us from self-centeredness. While being desirous to lift the discussion of Christ's Divinity out of the traditional context, i.e., in what particular way He was divine, Temple's emphasis on the exemplary characteristics does not do justice to the Person of Christ. This ethico-religious emphasis does not coincide with Temple's discussion of the Logos Christology. Christ, in Temple's thought, is little more than a moral leader or a religious genius.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

E. Union of the two Persons:

Temple admits that the union of the two persons in Jesus the Christ is a unique fact which cannot be fully explained. "Man who is not yet God possessed, cannot comprehend the perfect union of God and man"²⁰. and "if any man says that he understands the relation of Deity to humanity in Christ, he only makes it clear that he does not understand at all what is meant by the Incarnation."²¹. Temple does not attempt to spell out in his essay his views on the union of the two natures, but, with the ideas set forward in other writings and what remains implicit in "Christus Veritas", we may suggest his approach to the problem. Elsewhere, i.e., in "Mens Creatrix", Temple admits that he is in the line of Paul of Samosata who tried to express the union of the two natures in Christ in terms of will. He believes that he has escaped from Paul's errors because he does not distinguish between will and substance as Paul did. Temple defines will not as a faculty but as "the whole being of a man organised for action." Of all human beings, Jesus is the only one who has a fully developed will, whereas other men have only

20. Ibid., p.121.

21. Ibid., p.139.

a partially developed will. Therefore, it would be better to say that in Christ God and man are personally one, the person of the man Christ Jesus is God the Son."²². The human personality does not exist side by side with the Divine personality; it is subsumed in it."²³. The foregoing statements imply Jesus' humanity was impersonal. Temple denies this is what he means when he affirms that "it is only because there is this real human will or personality (ideally interchangeable terms in Temple's thought) that there is here any revelation to humanity of the Divine Will."²⁴. However, he attempts to explicate his position, Temple seems to be forced to attribute a human personality to Christ which comes through moral effort and development to the completeness of the Divine Will. Temple supports historically the doctrine of the impersonal humanity of Christ because it served to preserve a theoretical union of the two natures in one person. "Mankind or humanity," according to Temple, "is a close knit system of mutually influencing units and in this sense the humanity of everyone of us is of mutually influencing units and in this sense the humanity of everyone of us is 'impersonal', and the greater the man, the less merely 'personal' is his humanity."²⁵.

22. Ibid., p.146.

23. Ibid., p.150.

24. Ibid., p.150.

25. Ibid., p.151.

After these statements, it appears contradictory for Temple to declare that there are two wills in Christ and that the human will grew into fuller and deeper union with the Divine Will until perfect union was revealed in the complete sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Though this progressive scheme is affirmed, Temple still contends that the human will is never separate and distinct from the Divine Will. The human is subsumed in the Divine Will so that we see the Divine life predominant in the human personality. On the basis of these preceding contradictory statements, one may believe that Temple does not provide for a real unity of Christ's humanity and divinity through the use of the concept of will. When we advance the idea of two wills in Christ, we begin with a dualistic conception that is difficult to overcome on any other basis than by saying there was a moral or ethico-religious union between the wills. Because Temple hesitated to affirm this type of union, we may expect to find his consideration of this problem ambiguous and conflicting.

In another writing, somewhat earlier than the present one we are examining, Temple unhesitatingly says that Christ was united to God in will. Of

26. *Foundations*, edited by Streeter, p. 245.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 249.

course, according to him, "Christ's will as a subjective function is not the Father's will; but, the content of the wills - the purpose - is the same."²⁶ Christ, therefore, is not God, but God and Christ are one. Christ is a man whose will is united to God's. Other men's wills are united to God's will to a more or less degree, but Christ's will is perfectly united to the Father's will. Temple states the matter as a logician when he writes: "Formerly (as pure subjects) God and Christ are distinct; materially (that is in content of two consciousness) God and Christ are one and the same."²⁷ So, on the basis of the content of Christ's and God's will, we may say that they are one. The Divine Will in Christ is the Logos and the purpose of Christ seems to be the purpose of God. These statements add up to the idea previously advanced, namely, the union between the human and divine is nothing more than a moral and ethical union and Jesus is a good moral example.

The criticism of Temple's position by Martin Creed in "Mysterium Christi" substantiates our evaluation. Creed's words may be quoted in full. "Temple would say that the whole personality of Christ is not something given at the start by the existence side by side of the Divine and human natures, but

26. Foundations, edited by Streeter, p.248.

27. Ibid., p.249.

something achieved by life's actions, i.e., normally...To which aspect of Jesus does His self-conscious ego belong, the divine or the human? Temple seems inconsistent. As 'Person', (entirety of His spiritual being), Jesus is both Man and God. 'Yet, the Person of the man Christ Jesus is God the Son' - person here being used in the more limited sense, that of self-conscious subject or ego. But, again he says, 'There being two wills in the Incarnate Lord, His human nature comes through struggle and effort to an even deeper union with the Divine, in completeness of self-sacrifice.' Whose, we ask, is the moral effort? Surely it is Christ's human consciousness subordinating itself to the Father's will. For we cannot predicate moral progress of God the Son. The logical conclusion would seem to be that Christ's moral person or self-conscious ego was the man Jesus rather than the Logos, though it was to the latter's influence, operative in unique fullness, that his whole historical person owed its unique Divine Sonship. And, of course, Temple goes on to say that the real human will or personality, through which the Divine Will in Christ comes morally to revelation is per se apart from the Incarnate Lord, a man."²⁸.

28. H.T. Andrews (editor) "Lord of Life"
 Essay by Martin Creed, p.180-181.

If the union of the two natures in Christ is only a moral union, and this seems to be the case in Temple's thought, it is clear that this view undermines the divinity of Christ. If the Chalcedonian attempt to explain the Incarnation in terms of essence, substance and nature, represents for Temple "the bankruptcy of Greek patristic theology," then we may say that Temple's effort to present the Incarnation as the natural outcome of an evolutionary theory and to portray the union of the Divine and Human natures in Christ morally and ethically, represents a return to a subtle form of Antiochian adoptionism. Furthermore, if these ideas are substantial, our salvation rests on what Professor Robert Calhoun has termed in his discussion of Nestorianism, "a happy accident."

F. The Work of Christ:

"What is the difference made for us by the manifestation of the Divine life in a human life?"²⁹. By way of answering this inquiry, Temple relates his view of salvation, conversion and self-sacrifice.

29. "Christus Veritas" - p.220.

Salvation is to be set free from self, and how, Temple asks, can a life be anything else? We are selves, and from self-hood we cannot escape. Temple further says: What is required is not that (a man) should become either some one else or no-one in particular, but that he should discharge his particular function in response to the Universal Spirit, the Spirit of the whole - "Salvation, therefore, consists in the substitution of the Spirit of the Whole for the particular self in the control of all life, conduct, thought and feeling."³⁰ Temple terms this as "conversion", and he defines conversion as a change in the direction of a man's life taking the form of self-sacrifice, the putting aside of what is the good for the self and devotion to the "Universal good",³¹ "self-sacrifice is not the price of salvation; it is salvation, and salvation is such self-sacrifice."³²

How does the transforming power of God in Christ reorientate the life of a man toward this particular direction? Granted that, according to Temple,... "When man is really indwelt by God, nature will reveal new and entirely unpredictable qualities, "but, has he given us any clues on the process of the re-orientation of mankind? How does a man become a "new creature in Christ?" Temple declares

31. Ibid., p.221.

32. Ibid., p.221.

33. Ibid., p.240.

that the work of Christ is the revelation of the suffering love of God to men. This work is concentrated in the cross of Christ, for there we see supremely what sin costs God. This revelation of love draws forth man's repentance and responsive love. While Temple has adequately emphasised the response in men's hearts to the revelation of God's love, his doctrine of the atonement is inadequate because he does not sufficiently point out the objective action of God to save us from our sin. Because Temple does not have a realistic view of man's sin and man's involvement in despair and alienation from God, he does not take into consideration the possibility that man will not and cannot repent before the revelation of Divine love. A doctrine of the atonement should include both the objective and subjective features, and concerning the former aspect of the work of God in Christ, no-one can adequately state, but it is our conviction that Temple passes over this emphasis throughout his Christology.

G. The Sacraments:

Temple's teaching concerning the sacraments of the Church cannot be understood unless we see them in the foreground of a universe which is

fundamentally sacramental. "The Universe is," according to Temple, the fundamental sacrament - extensively - but it only becomes this because within it and determining its course is the Incarnation, which is the perfect sacrament intensively - resulting from the Incarnation we find the 'Spirit-bearing Body' which is not actually a perfect sacrament, because its members are not utterly surrendered to the spirit within it."³⁴. This idea, in Temple's thought, does not cancel out particular sacramental acts. In a later writing, he defines sacrament for us when he writes: "A sacrament - is an instance of a very definite and special relationship of spirit and matter."³⁵. It is a spiritual utilisation of a material object whereby a spiritual result is effect;"³⁶ and the epithet "sacrament" may be attached rightly not only to the recognised sacraments of the Church, Baptism and the Eucharist, but to all Worship in so far as an "act of Worship, like all other human acts, must at least have physical expression, and in so far as it does, it is always sacramental."³⁷. Temple would say that there are differences between the sacrament of the preaching of the Word and the

34. Ibid., p.234.

35. "Nature, Man and God" - p.491.

36. Ibid., p.491.

37. "Christus Verita" - p.232.

sacrament of the Eucharist. But, neither is to be put on a lower plane than the other; whereas in the former the human personality is prominent as the vehicle of the sacrament, the latter emphasises the divine initiative."³⁸.

A brief consideration of the two dominical sacraments in Temple's thought will suffice in our presentation. The sacrament of..."Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration and of incorporation into the Church (or into Christ)." ³⁹. As the sacrament of Baptism is the introduction of a man into that society of the Church which is the type of what is God's purpose for the society of all men, so the Eucharist, in which we partake of the Flesh and Blood of our Lord, is the divinely appointed means of strengthening and upbuilding of the Church as the Body of Christ.

While much could be said concerning Temple's treatment of these two sacraments, his emphasis on the close connection between these sacraments and reality and his concern that sacramental worship and social concern should be seen as simultaneous aspects of the true worship of God and His Christ strike the writer as being one of

38. Ibid., p.232.

39. Ibid., p.235.

the most remarkable achievements of his thought.

6. Evaluation.

We have outlined William Temple's philosophical ideas and his Christology for two reasons: In the first place, we are interested in the efforts in the early decades of the 20th century to combine the two emphases which prevailed in one form or another in the late 19th century, i.e., an interest in the historical, factually and objectively understood, and an extension of the historical to include development and change. A derivative pattern in the late 19th century which is at work in and to some degree unreconciled in Temple's theology and in many theologians in the mid-twentieth century concerns the relationship between philosophy and theology. Temple, among others, utilises philosophical ideas and clothes his theological thought with contemporary philosophical idioms. In a sense, these philosophical patterns provided the framework for a non-mythological presentation of the Christian message, viz. emergent evolution. While others in this century, continuing the Ritschlian distrust of philosophical categories and alien speculations,

e.g., Barth and to some extent Bultmann, are loathe to use philosophical language. Though Barth, according to Tillich and others, makes use of philosophy, albeit covertly, in his theologoical language.

This one point we want to establish and we believe is has been substantiated in our brief exposition of Temple's thought: the convergence of two interpretations of the historical and the potential reconciliation of the use of certain categories depicting the 'ultimate' in the Christian faith. A summary examination of Temple's theology and philosophy mirrors two essential points. (1) Temple is attempting in a language and thought form acceptable to his day to relate the motives associated with Hegelianism and Ritschlianism, while being in sympathy with the ethico-religious aspect of Christianity. Temple is cognisant of the other factors in Christianity which have the possibility of grounding this ethical interest in some universal context. In his Christology, there is an effort to relate two Christologies. On the one hand, he desires to do justice to the historical Jesus and his particular relationship to the Father - a relationship which

was submerged in the early creedal formulations. Temple is interested in translating the analogies used in Patristic thought, e.g., substance, nature, into metaphors and symbols drawn from the life of man, e.g., personality, will, etc. On the other hand, He does not want to sacrifice, as did his Ritschlian predecessors, the mythological ideas which depict the ultimacy of Jesus the Christ, e.g., the Logos idea, "New Creature" and Christ's relationship to Creation. His reliance on an evolutionary hypothesis and his view of the historical process as a dialectical realising of the higher forms of life affords Temple a basis in history. That is to say, he desires to demonstrate upon this "emergent" hypothesis the horizontal character of the Christian message. The message of the Christ sprang out of the world, in the world, and is to be understood and appropriated within the world through symbols and analogies drawn from history, especially from the realm of personality. But, Temple's thought, especially when he begins his discussion of the aspects of Christology requiring another dimension, i.e., Person of Christ, the Trinity and the emergence of the Church and Sacraments, relates the horizontal process to a

vertical, transcendent dimension. Though this dimension is not wholly reconciled with his philosophical base, especially with his concern for natural theology.

It appears to this writer that Temple represents in his philosophy and theology and in his horizontal and vertical emphases, the conflicting patterns in 20th century theology. In Temple, there cannot be a return to an idealism - whatever the form, that of the early Fathers or Hegel - which disregards or runs roughshod over the horizontal (historical) qualities in Christianity. The Christian message in Temple's thought is conditioned, as all interpretations of the Gospel inevitably are, by the time in which he wrote. The Ritschlian concern for objectivity and the empirical basis of the Christian message and the consequent evaluation (value-judgments) of the revelation by a mind divinely illumined to receive the message, lies at the roots of Temple's interpretation of history. This objective-subjective interpretation of history could not receive the thought that the interpretation, however indefinite and vague, was part and parcel of the event, objectively viewed.

But, unlike his distinguished predecessors in the

Ritschlian school, he was at variance with their primary evaluation of God, viz. through His effects and predicates. Temple's theology was placed in a framework which entailed some symbolic description of the 'ultimate' (God-in-Himself) in and beyond the historical process.

Temple is particularly qualified to serve as a bridge over the years which separate the Ritschlians and the numerous reactions to the motives of this school of theology in the 20th century. Temple retained his interest in the social message of the Gospel, while attempting to relate the ethico-religious to the Person of Christ. His many small books on the social function of the Church, e.g., "Christianity and the Social Order", "Christianity and the State", "Christianity in Thought and Practice", "Citizen and Churchman", "Christian Faith and Life", etc., have made an impact upon contemporary treatment of social and Christian ethical themes.

Professors John Bennett and Rheinhold Niebuhr of Union Seminary in New York have expressed their indebtedness to Temple's clarification of the role of the Church in society. "The greatest theologian in the Church of England,"⁴⁰.

40. Forsyth, J. Ford, "The Doctrine of the Church and its Ethical Significance According to Three Modern Theologians, Temple, Brunner, Brown, Ph.D. thesis, Union Seminary," p.72.

according to Rheinhold Niebuhr, has made contemporary theologians aware of the need for the spiritual transformation of man's life in the world. Many of the motifs associated with Ritschlianism, e.g., the Kingdom of God, social salvation and the qualities which made Jesus significant, viz. His obedience and faithfulness, are given 'body' and clothed in a more constructive garment in Temple's theology.

May we point to the reason why Temple was chosen to serve as our guide to the 20th century and as a bridge connecting the 19th and 20th century. Temple is a mediating theologian. His thought stands between the liberal and orthodox emphases in contemporary theology. He sought to do justice to either claim. But, as we had opportunity to point out in several instances, the varying concerns in his theology and philosophy did not receive incisive integration. In a word, Temple is dialectical without being paradoxical. That is to say, he is intent on relating the historical and cosmic in his theology. The dialectical character in Temple's thought is mirrored in his treatment of the Trinity. But Temple, as we remarked, is not paradoxical. By paradoxical we mean "against the doxa," against the natural world-view, the opinion which everybody

has. What is against this doxa is "para-dox-ical". There is one event which is against this doxa, namely, that under the conditions of existence in which God and man are estranged from each other, essential God-manhood appears: this is the paradox of the Christ. This is against every opinion, and cannot be derived from existence. While William Temple errs on the side of understanding the paradoxical event as an extension of reason, Karl Barth errs in another direction when he describes the event in supernatural terms as a miracle which breaks into reality, from one world into another world.

In the next chapters we shall be concerned with another effort to clothe the Christian message in some intelligible idiom. In our comparison of David Friedrich Strauss and Rudolf Bultmann, we shall focus on the ways in which they use 'modern thought' in their demythologizing schemes. We move from this initial consideration to a description of myth in Bultmann's thought and the criticism of his theology which may be made by Paul Tillich.

CHAPTER II.

NEW TESTAMENT AND MYTHOLOGY: RUDOLF BULTMANN.

1. Introduction.

Since Rudolf Bultmann's controversial essay "New Testament and Mythology" appeared in 1941, he has occupied the stage of theological debate, formerly held for two decades by his teacher, Karl Barth. With the translation of his work in English and his lecturing tours in the United States and Britain, he has merited the title, "the Strauss of the twentieth Century".¹ His theology, in particular that aspect which offers a description of myth in the New Testament, has set off a theological firecracker which is reverberating around the world. Professor Ian Henderson led the English world in its consideration of Bultmann's initial essay. While not giving a literal translation of Bultmann's essay in his "Myth in the New Testament", Henderson paraphrased and critically evaluated Bultmann's theses. Professor Henderson's discussion of the issues, especially Bultmann's relationship to history and his rendering of some of the difficult German idioms, has set the stage for many

1. Baillie, D.M., "God Was In Christ" - p.22.

subsequent explorations. Bultmann's essay has since been translated in the first volume of "Kerygma and Myth", along with several critical appraisals of the work by German theologians and Bultmann's replies. A second volume of "Kerygma and Myth", not yet in English, continues this theological debate.

Probably the best and by far the most thorough evaluation of Bultmann's theology and Philosophical roots has been done by Dr. John Macquarrie in his "Existential Theology". Dr. Macquarrie compares Bultmann and Heidegger and offers the English-speaking world a very valueable critique of Bultmann's theology and an original appraisal of and translation of Heidegger's philosophy. When Macquarrie's translation of "Sein und Zeit" is complete we shall be in a better position to make some of the comparisons which he cites in his provocative work.

G.V. Jones has contributed to the discussion in his "Christology and Myth in the New Testament", but, unfortunately, his contribution suffers from an effort to explore too many issues. His articles in the "Expository Times", June and July, 1956, entitled "Bultmann and the Liberal Theology" offers a more incisive evaluation of Bultmann's thought.

Amos Wilder's article in the "Journal of Biblical Literature", LXIX, 1950, "Myth and the New Testament", and his supplementary remarks in his book "Eschatology and Ethics in the Teaching of Jesus", while clarifying the essential issues at stake in Bultmann's demythologization, misses Bultmann's primary emphasis, viz. re-interpretation of the mythology in the New Testament. If Wilder and Paul Minear ("Eyes of Faith") were criticising Strauss who, unlike Bultmann, sought to eliminate myth in the New Testament, their evaluations would be more to the point. Unfortunately, these New Testament scholars, along with scores of others, seem to be too biased to give Bultmann a hearing.

Paul Tillich's "Systematic Theology", Vol. II, especially his constant use of the word "demythologizing", is an indication that Bultmann's theme must be discussed, even by a theologian who demythologizes the Christian message from another perspective. The word "demythologization" does not appear in Tillich's first volume, but, because of the interest shown in Bultmann's scheme, Tillich has had to clarify his own position.

The Germans have been very prodigious contributors

to this theological debate. Gogarten's sympathetic work has already been cited. Jaspers carries on a fruitful debate with Bultmann in a book entitled "Die Frage Der Entmythologisierung".

It is pointless to prolong this brief survey of the literature on the subject. No informed theologian can bypass the issues raised by Bultmann.

Obviously, we cannot discuss Bultmann's theology in any comprehensive manner. We must choose our emphases and generalise on the basis of the trends which we discern in his thought. It is proposed in the pages to follow to discuss Bultmann's theology and his demythologization of the New Testament in the following way. First, we shall explore in the region where Bultmann's scheme compares with David F. Strauss' in the 19th century. This is done primarily to set the stage for some of the issues which Bultmann grapples with in his plan. Secondly, we shall recapitulate Strauss' demythologizing of the Christian message, giving special attention to the two norms which served him in his interpretation of myth in the New Testament, i.e., the canons of modern science and Hegelian Philosophy. Thirdly, we will turn to Bultmann's essay "New Testament and Mythology" to discover his aim, his concept of myth and the ways

in which he attempts to avoid having his scheme subjected to the same criticism levelled against Strauss, viz. capitulation to a modern world-view. Finally, it is evident that Bultmann's demythologizing programme cannot be understood apart from his total theological perspective. At this point we will use the thought of Paul Tillich to estimate the deficiency we discerned in Bultmann's theology. As we proceed, something will be said about Bultmann's relationship to the Ritschlians, particularly Herrmann.

2. D.F. Strauss and Rudolf Bultmann: Approach to the problem of Myth in the New Testament.

D.F. Strauss and Rudolf Bultmann, while living in different centuries and influenced by different ideas and offering dissimilar solutions for the problems which they address themselves to, brought identical questions to bear on the Christian message. The former asked in his "Life of Jesus", in 1835: "Is the Gospel history true or reliable as a whole, and its details, or is it not?"². In other words, on the basis of what we know of history, science and philosophy, and, in particular, the character of God, what is true and valid for all

2. Strauss, "Life of Jesus".

time, and what, in the light of casual and temporary circumstances, has now become useless, pernicious and obsolete? The latter theologian inquired in his essay "New Testament and Mythology" in 1941: "Can Christian preaching expect modern man to accept the mythical view of the world as true?"³ Can the modern man still be Christian in the genuine sense that he believes in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour? If so, does this mean that modern man, living and thinking in the light of the results of modern science, must believe in the resurrection as a miraculous fact, in the empty tomb, in the "Last Day" as the end of human history, in the virgin birth, in angels, and demons, etc?

Both of these theologians posed their questions as Christians whose prime intention was to be sincere with themselves, to be sincere before God, and to be at the same time a citizen of our modern world. Both theologians, in their definition and exposition of the problem and in their separate solutions, caused considerable consternation among biblical critics and theologians. But, and this needs emphasising, these New Testament scholars were not seeking to harm Christianity or

3. Bultmann, Rudolf, "Kerygma and Myth" - p.3.

impede the interpretation of the Gospel; on the contrary, they are seeking to free Christianity and make possible a wider affirmation of the Christian message.

Not only were their questions similar, but their inquiries were motivated by a similar assumption, viz. the scientific picture of the modern world. Strauss and Bultmann believe in the uniformity of history and the natural order. Strauss, we recall, believed Gospel history to be unhistorical when the narrative is irreconcilable with the known and universal laws which govern the course of events. The ancient world, according to him, did not delineate the infinite and finite; consequently, God was viewed as the immediate cause of every change in nature or the human mind. But, the modern scientific approach to history views events as successive. All occurrences, not excepting the most violent convulsions and the most rapid changes, follow in certain order of sequence of increase and decrease. On the other hand, Bultmann, writing a hundred years later, makes the same point. "Man's knowledge and mastery of the world have advanced to such an extent through science and technology, that it is no longer

possible for anyone seriously to hold the New Testament view of the world...What meaning, for instance, can we attach to such phrases in the creed as 'descended into hell' or 'ascended into heaven'?....We no longer believe in the three-storied universe which the creeds take for granted. The only honest way of reciting the creeds is to strip the mythological framework from the truth which they enshrine - that is, assuming that they contain any truth at all, which is just the question that theologians have to ask."⁴ In another context in his essay, Bultmann writes: "The only relevant question for the theologian is the basic assumption on which the adoption of a biological as of every other Weltanschauung rests, and that assumption is the view of the world which has been moulded by modern science and the modern conception of human nature as a self-subsistent unity immune from the interference of supernatural powers."⁵

It would appear that both theologians allow the contemporary post-Copernican scientific picture to act as their criterion for discarding the pre-scientific view in the Bible. Both theologians assume that in this scientific age we cannot believe in miracles, e.g., resurrection,

4. Ibid., p.4.

5. Ibid., p.7.

transfiguration, etc. Criticisms levelled against Strauss' scheme are echoed in those offered against Bultmann's scheme. Strauss' capitulation to modern science, according to his critics, is merely carried forth in Bultmann's theology in another guise.

The third level of obvious agreement concerns their common denial of the demything schemes devised by the naturalists (Paulus and Eichorn in Strauss' era) and the later liberals (Harnack and the historicists in Bultmann's era). These naturalists, rationalists and later 19th century liberals, hoped to discover behind the miraculous and symbolic statements in the New Testament, the genuine history of Jesus. When certain thoughts were eliminated and fantastic impostures uncovered, the history of Jesus could be disengaged from the outward shell. Paulus and Eichorn believed that the Old and New Testament writings contained a minute and faithful historical narration, composed shortly after the occurrence of the events, recorded and derived, whenever this was possible, from the testimony of eye witnesses. Strauss, we recall, was anxious to point out, though not on a textual or source examination of the narratives, that the miraculous forms affected the content of the

historical narrations. The Evangelists, according to Strauss, considered the things which Paulus and others would retain as essential, as secondary aspects. That which Paulus calls the Evangelists' opinion about the fact, constituted, in their estimation, the fact itself. The essential defect of the naturalist position and the later "Quest of the Historical Jesus" school, is its unhistorical mode of procedure. These commentators allow conjectures to supply the deficiencies of the record; adopt individual speculations as a substitute for real history; seek by vain endeavours to represent real history that as natural which the narrative describes as supernatural; and lastly, the method of the naturalists evaporates all sacredness and divinity from the scriptures, reducing them to collections of amusing tales no longer meriting the name of history.

In his searching criticisms of the naturalists, Strauss has, from a different perspective, given voice to the criticisms which contemporary theologians have made against the efforts of Harnack and the historicists to extract the eternal ideas - the kernel of Jesus' message - from the temporary husks. These late 19th century interpreters

considered Eschatology and Christology as a mythological clothing of the pure belief in the God of Jesus. The ideas associated with the historical Jesus, discoverable behind the furniture of the New Testament and later Patristic embellishments, are timeless realities. Jesus' views on the brotherhood of man, the Fatherhood of God and His ethical deeds and high moral aims are the timeless values behind the temporal clothing.

But, how did Strauss propose to account for the innumerable, and never otherwise to be harmonised discrepancies and chronological contradictions in the Gospel histories? These factors, according to him, would disappear, as it were, at one stroke if the mythical view is admitted.

For the moment we are not concerned with Strauss' view of myth and its function in the New Testament. Nor are we concerned to point out that Strauss' early clarification of the problem of mythology in the scriptures and his solution, i.e., his mythical key, subordinated the Gospel to timeless truths streaming out of Hegelian philosophy. We are not concerned to distinguish Strauss' and Bultmann's definition and application of the mythical key. We are interested in establishing their common historical scepticism. Strauss was not, whatever

and form criticism, the two men, however they differ

his reasons, interested in the historical facts in the Gospel history. That is to say, he was not intent, as were the naturalists, rationalists and later historicists in the 19th century, upon recording the pure history which lay behind the accidental embellishments which science or philosophy had decided upon. Unlike his liberal successors, he was not interested in the distinction between the religion of Jesus and the religion about Jesus. He did not, so far as we could determine - though this is evident to some degree in his "Popular Life for the German People" in 1864 - erect an antithesis between Jesus and Christ within the New Testament. When he concerned himself with the antithesis between historical facts and the Idea which these facts depicted in a mythical or pictorial fashion, he did not view the facts as supreme. It was, as we have pointed out, the Idea of the Divine Humanity which these facts suggested which was foremost in his mythical inquiry.

What is the state of affairs when we survey Bultmann's thoughts on the real Jesus - the Jesus which the naturalists and historicists thought they could find behind the records? While Bultmann's views have been influenced by a century of source and form criticism, the two men, however they arrive

at their perspective, are not interested in the factual, past event of Jesus. A paragraph from Bultmann's "Jesus" illustrates and substantiates our point. He writes of his attitude towards the historical approach to the life of Jesus: "In the following exposition (he says) indications that Jesus might be regarded as the Great Man or Genius will be lacking; he appears neither as a 'demonic' nor 'fascinating' figure. His words will not be described as profound, nor His faith as mighty, nor His character childlike. ~~Its~~ subject is not the eternal value of His message, nor his discovery of the limitless depths of the human soul. Our attention will be directed to that which he intended, and which can, therefore, as the challenge of his historical existence, become a present reality. For this reason, any concern with the 'personality' of Jesus is excluded, but not because I make a virtue of necessity; for I am naturally of the opinion that we know almost nothing about the life and personality of Jesus, as the Christian sources were not interested in them and are, further, fragmentary and overgrown with legend; and there are no other sources."⁶.

Another statement from his essay "New Testament

6. Bultmann, Rudolf, "Jesus" - p.11-12.

and Mythology" gives us Bultmann's conception of the role of historical criticism. He writes: "The facts which historical criticism can verify cannot exhaust, indeed they cannot adequately indicate, all that Jesus means to me. How he actually originated matters little, indeed we can appreciate his significance only when we cease to worry about such questions. Our interest is in the events of his life, and above all in the cross, is more than an academic concern with the history of the past. We can see meaning in them only when we ask what God is trying to say to each one of us through them."⁷

While Strauss and Bultmann, on the basis of their separate perspectives, were not interested in recapturing the "Jesus of history", or presenting the Gospel as a series of facts about a man in the first century, it is clear that both did not doubt there was such a Jesus. Both men may underestimate the impression which Jesus made upon His disciples and both may pass too quickly from the "objective-historical" to the "existential-historical"⁸ (Bultmann) or from the "image" to the "Notion" (Strauss). Some of the men influenced by Strauss' mythical key, e.g. Bauer

7. Bultmann, "Kerygma and Myth" - p.35.

8. Macquarrie, op.cit. p.170.

and, indirectly, the Christ-Myth theorists in the early 20th century, went on to doubt and deny the historical Jesus. Similarly, according to Macquarrie, some of the men influenced by Bultmann, e.g., Jaspers and Fritz Buri, dehistoricize the Christian faith.⁹ It is probable that we may witness, though only from those who misunderstood Bultmann's interpretation of the historical Jesus, a negation of the historical Jesus in the future.

It is clear from the foregoing similarity between Strauss and Bultmann, that we cannot glibly say that Bultmann merely returned to a conception of history which Strauss denied in his theology. The issues are not that simple. The question left in our minds by this discussion concerns the nature of the "Kerygma" in Bultmann's theology. Is the "Kerygma" in Bultmann and the "Idea" in Strauss the same? That is to say; Does the "Kerygma" cease to be historical in the same sense as the "Idea"? This question will be answered when we discuss Bultmann's interpretation of "history", i.e., *historisch* and *geschichtlich*. Meanwhile, we may move to another similarity between the two theologians, more of a terminological character.

9. Macquarrie, John, "The Limitations of Demythologizing" - Unpublished lectures delivered at Union Theological Seminary, N.Y.C., Spring, 1957.

Bultmann and Strauss express their methodological key for the interpretation of New Testament mythology in a similar fashion. On the one hand, Strauss is concerned with the notion of self-consciousness. An elimination of the obsolete mythology or pictorial language will bring mankind to a realisation or (self-awareness) of the prevailing unity between the finite and infinite. The pictorial (*Vorstellung*) may suggest this unity to the naive mind, but this consciousness is native to one who does not require a concrete manifestation of the unity. Self-consciousness for Hegel and Strauss is an immanent quality - something which exists prior to and apart from any special revelation. The purpose of philosophy and theology is to sketch this innate quality and to negate anything that obstructs this awareness.

Bultmann's methodological interpretative key and its terminological similarity with Strauss' may be seen in his crucial question: "What does the myth say about man's relation to God in the midst of this world? What is the conception and the understanding of our personal life expressed in the myth? While Bultmann's interest in self-understanding has this terminological similarity with Strauss' self-consciousness, this is the only

point of agreement. Self-understanding, unlike Strauss' self-consciousness, according to Bultmann, has its source in the revelation coming to meet man. This existential interpretation of myth comes from above into existence. That is to say, in Bultmann's concern for the encounter between God and man in the New Testament and in history presupposes a genuine difference between the finite and the infinite and yet a basis for contact between them.⁸

But, have we exhausted the obvious agreements between the two theologians, even if some of these similarities are merely terminological and extremely tenuous when the underlying assumptions are surveyed? There is another agreement between the two men, though this emphasis was rectified by Bultmann in his later interpretation of myth. I refer here to a definition of myth which appeared in Bultmann's earlier writing "Geschichte der Synoptischen Tradition". In this writing, Bultmann relies on a view of myth which closely

8. The reader is referred to Bultmann's paradoxical understanding of the points of contact and conflict in his essay by that name in the volume of essays entitled "Essays: Philosophical and Theological". In this essay, Bultmann, unlike Barth, clarifies his understanding of the possibility of man receiving revelation, though he is in a "fallen" state.

resembles Strauss' conception. For example, when Bultmann determines the content which is taken over from materials which deal with gods and their fate as myth, his view may be understood to mean what Strauss meant when he understood myth as fantasies of man. We shall inquire into this distinction when we examine Bultmann's handling of myth in his essay "New Testament and Mythology".

Our exposition to this point has merely raised questions which, if our essay was intended to expound the various nuances of difference and agreement between the two theologians, we would be obliged to expose. But, we are searching for an essential difference between the two ways of demythologizing the New Testament message which, on the one hand, will serve as a comparative guide, and, on the other hand, mirror the advance made in Bultmann's plan. Possibly our surest way, though by no means the easiest or safest, is to discuss their use of myth. There seems to be a fundamental difference between Strauss and Bultmann at the level of their understanding of two adjectives which are used interchangeably in their theologies,

i.e. mythical and mythological. The former adjective expresses Strauss' approach to the New Testament and the latter is Bultmann's way of looking at the reality, albeit garmented in myth, in the New Testament. Strauss is concerned with the origin of and elimination of myth, and Bultmann with the content and interpretation of myth. Possibly our discussion will receive, despite the misunderstandings on every hand, some clarity if we further state how we are going to elaborate this essential clue. In the first place, we are going to allow Strauss to explain his view of myth and the mythical way of looking at things. In this point, we shall be concerned, as was Strauss, with the origin of the mythical. The two criteria which served to eliminate the mythical, i.e., modern science and Hegelian philosophy. The Straussian idea of self-consciousness will be clarified. In our exposition of Bultmann, we will want to explore his dual conception of myth and to comprehend his mythological way of looking at things which is valid apart from the corrections and aids received in modern science and Heideggerian philosophy. In this point, we shall want to point to Bultmann's

"self-understanding". Some of the weaknesses of Bultmann's scheme will be recorded, e.g. an elimination of the cosmic Christology in the New Testament, particularly to be detected in the unimportance assigned to the passages about the second coming, etc. After we have shown Bultmann's relationship to Strauss and his advance beyond the 19th century demythologizing schemes, we shall want to pick up the thread of our argument, i.e., Bultmann's understanding of history and his indebtedness to Wilhelm Herrmann.

3. Strauss' Demythologization of the Christian Message.

We have surveyed Strauss' demythologizing scheme in some detail in the first section of our thesis, but, for the purpose of comparing and contrasting his approach with Rudolf Bultmann, some of his essential points must be briefly summarised. We turn now to his primary interest in myth and his understanding of myth and history.

Strauss is interested primarily in the origin of myth in the New Testament and how, on the basis of his Hegelian philosophy, i.e., the idea gaining

form in the Vorstellung (the image) and returning to itself through this temporary antithesis, these unconscious, spontaneous and unintentional imaginations are carried into the person of Jesus. The Jesus which Strauss sketched for us in his "Dogmatic reconstruction of the Life of Jesus" was, as we intimated, but the reflection of an Hegelian face. His interest in mythology was a springboard for his philosophic speculations and his concern to distinguish between the types of myth in the New Testament, e.g., Evangelical, Pure, Historical, was a means to substantiate the primary type of myth in the New Testament, i.e., the Pure or Philosophical myth. The image, pictorial or myth, obstructed the realisation of the Idea, i.e., the Divine Humanity or the self-consciousness of God and man.

In our summary of Strauss in the context of a discussion primarily designed to understand Bultmann's demythologizing, we are intent on bringing into some focus the points which will enable us to discover what Bultmann has attempted, and how his process of demything differs from Strauss.

A. Origin of Myth.

Strauss' biblical work was designed to prove the presence of myth in the New Testament and to discuss the origin of the mythical ideas. His problem was to show that myth, or the application of myth was too circumscribed. The entrance to Gospel history and the exit was accepted as myth, but the immediate space was still traversed by the crooked and toilsome paths of natural interpretation. To disprove the interpretation of the Rationalists and supernaturalists, Strauss must find myth in the public life of Jesus - from the Baptism to the resurrection. How was he to demonstrate mythical embellishments in every section of Gospel history?

He attempted, in the first place, to show that the life of Jesus was not written by eye-witnesses, or any nearly contemporaneous with the events in the life of Jesus. The Rationalists, Naturalists and supernaturalists had assumed the historical basis of the Old and New Testaments. The former interpreters recognised legendary accretions, but, on the basis of their assumption concerning the genuineness of the accounts, these embellishments could be disengaged from the historical accounts. Secondly, even if documents could be found that were written during the life-time of Jesus, these

ideas were still imbued with a philosophy of history which failed to distinguish between history and supra-history. In other words, on the basis of the requirements of modern science, e.g., the non-interference of the casual, natural and historical process, these writings could not stand as historical documents.

In these two external criteria, the production of the New Testament writings from Oral tradition and the unhistorical nature of the content when it presupposed the violation of the natural order, Strauss had set up his case for myth in the New Testament. His fundamental idea of the unhistorical element in the Gospels being that of myth, by which he understood investitures, resembling history of original Christian ideas, fashioned in the legend which unconsciously invented them. These legends, or legendary transformations of the real life of Jesus arose chiefly from the practical feelings and wants of the people and on this account formed according to the free play of the imagination.

The life of Jesus, then, is the mythical creation of facts out of ideas. These ideas were narrated into facts - ideas which arose unconsciously and unintentionally from the Old Testament

background. The life of Jesus was depicted feature for feature after the Old Testament prototypes. Strauss' thought in this matter is illustrated in the guide which he believed directed the Evangelists in their narrations. "Such and such things must have happened to the Messiah; Jesus was the Messiah; therefore, such and such things happened to him." An illustrate syllogism which Strauss employs makes his point clear: "The Messiah was to come from Bethlehem, Jesus was the Messiah, consequently he must have been born in Bethlehem." The Messianic prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus. He had to correspond to the example of Moses, to come from the stock of David, to be born in Bethlehem, etc. etc. His life had to be adorned with the most splendid and significant events in the lives of the prophets. The deeds and types of the Prophets were to serve as examples of the Messiah.

But, how was Strauss to answer the objection that the interval between the death of Jesus and the formation of the narratives was too short for the rich collection of myth, and especially for the application of the Messianic myths to Jesus? These myths and legends, according to Strauss, did not have to be invented; they already existed

in the popular hope of the Messiah, having been mostly derived with various modifications from the Old Testament, and had merely to be transferred to Jesus and accommodated to his character and doctrines. These Old Testament prototypes were unconsciously transferred to Jesus.

But, having established myth in the New Testament on the grounds of the transmission of oral accounts and not eye-witness reports, and upon the nature of the writings in the New Testament, viz. the assumption that the casual nexus suffered interruptions from some supra-natural or supra-historical sphere; and having made it clear where myths originated; Strauss had to distinguish the various levels of myth in the New Testament. These were, according to him, Evangelical myth, Pure myth, Historical myth and additions of the individual authors which might be characterised as Poetical myth. The Evangelical myth is a product of an idea of Jesus' earliest disciples. The Pure or Philosophical myth is a Messianic idea and expectation transferred to Jesus. The Historical myth has for its groundwork a definite individual fact which has been seized upon by religious enthusiasm and twined around with

mythical conceptions culled from the idea of Christ. The additions, or Poetical myth, of the individuals are those myths which do not point to the impetus to clothe an idea, or to tradition, but which are designed to give clearness, connection and climax to the representation.

What then is the criterion used by Strauss to distinguish the various myths which are discovered in the New Testament? Strauss has two types of criteria which he develops in separate places in his writing. The first is elucidated when he poses this question in the body of his work, and the second evolves when he discusses the dogmatic import of his mythicising process in the last section of his "Life of Jesus". The first concerns the canons of modern science, and the second the things which his speculative philosophy can allow.

In the first criterion, it is the things which history cannot allow which are deemed unhistorical in the New Testament. History does not suffer violations and the chain of finite causes are successive, preserving the unbroken laws of psychology and the natural order. This criterion, moreover, asserts an account in the New Testament to be mythical partly by its form and partly by its

substance. If the form is poetical, if the actors converse in hymns, in a more diffuse and elevated strain than might be expected from their training or their situations, then, these discourses cannot be accepted as historical. If the contents within the region in which the narrative originated, which themselves seem to be formed from preconceived opinions rather than from actual experience, then, according to the circumstances, it is more or less probable that such a narrative had a mythical origin.

It would seem, on the basis of Strauss' theology, that modern science dictates what can be historical and what must be eliminated from the promiscuous blending of unhistorical ingredients and historical fact in the New Testament. This criterion was not a corrective or a guide in Strauss' efforts to explore the historical in the New Testament, but, it was the primary tool to enable him to validate his essential idea of myth: ideas which had gained form or been embodied in unessential facts. But, this moves him to another criterion for postulating the presence of myth in the New Testament and disengaging the Idea (Begriff) from the myth (Image or Vorstellung).

What, then, is the essential clue to the New

Testament and the means whereby the mythology may be eliminated and, at the same time, preserve the Christian faith? Strauss gives us a summary of his philosophical criterion in the section where he attempts to offer a reconstruction of the life of Jesus which had been invalidated by his mythical critique. He writes: "The real state of the case is this: The Church refers her Christology to an individual who existed historically at a certain period; the speculative theologian to an idea which attained existence in the totality of individuals; by the Church the evangelical narratives are received as history; by the critical theologian they are regarded for the most part as mere mythic." The rapprochement between religion and the deepest philosophical truth is made when the whole of humanity is the subject of the union of divine and human nature and when it is realised that the incarnation of God from eternity is a truer thing than one at an exclusive point of time.

Strauss' understanding of, and sympathy with, Hegel's ideas on the unity existing between God and man and of history as a path which actualises this self-conscious unity, leaves little place for

the Jesus of history or the Christ of Faith. In other words, there is no special revelation called for in the Hegelian-Straussian understanding of the "Absolute Religion". The New Testament, whether historical in parts and questionable in others, is not considered in his philosophical reconstructions. He is intent on showing that the "negation of the negation", viz. the negation of the phenomenal life, nature and all forms, i.e., Jesus, the higher life of self-awareness is realisable. Self-consciousness arises when man breaks away from nature, the sensual and the temporary, and returns to that which he essentially is - the union of the finite and infinite. The credentials for man's life are found in right thinking and in an awareness that, through thought, he might transcend relative and naive understandings of life.

We may close our brief recapitulation of Strauss with some discussion of his use of myth. Myth, for all intents and purposes, is regarded as an image, a story in fantastic dress of the Idea. When the Idea arrives at self-consciousness, viz. when God returns out of His Other and man breaks away from his temporal bonds, the image or the mythical and

historical in the New Testament is nothing but a dreamy vision. It would seem that Strauss follows the classical Greek idea of the myth: the myth is a word of falsehood making an image of the truth. In working with the form-content plan or the Vorstellung-Begriff pattern, the form and image may be a path through which the Idea passes, but, after the Idea is actualised, the path, i.e., history and every temporary interpretation of the embodiment of the Idea, is negated. The myth is an eternal idea become form. The elimination of the form releases the Idea.

With these thoughts in mind, we proceed to examine another effort to demythologize the New Testament message. It is important that we should bear in mind as we proceed, two points which have been described in Strauss' scheme, i.e., the place of modern thought in Bultmann's re-interpretation of the New Testament and his definition of myth. Is myth an image, a form to be eliminated? Is the Kerygma in Bultmann the same as the Idea in Strauss? Is the myth for Bultmann the image, and the Kerygma the Idea? Is there an ascent from myth to Kerygma in Bultmann's theology?

4. Bultmann's Demythologization of the New Testament:

In our brief recapitulation of Strauss' central ideas, we have outlined his criteria for distinguishing myth in the New Testament, i.e., modern science and Hegelian philosophy. It is at these two points which Bultmann has had to make his demythologizing scheme clear, and it is at this level where his plan, if viewed surfacely, is vulnerable. Whether he capitulates to modern science and a philosophy of existence, viz. Heidegger, will be one of our concerns. We saw that Strauss' capitulation to modern thought invalidated the historic revelation in Jesus Christ and, moreover, his Christological reconstruction stripped the New Testament of its distinctive character. The Hegelian Idea, while outwardly resembling the Kerygma, is merely a Christ Idea independent of the New Testament event and the New Testament message. Is the same the case in Rudolf Bultmann's theology?

A. Bultmann's Aim:

We have said that Bultmann's theology is motivated by his desire to face modern man with the genuine "stumbling block" of the New Testament. Instead of the "offense", the paradox of the God-man who addresses man through the word of preaching and encounters contemporary man in and through the ordinary course of events - events seen in their casual relation - and demands a decision from man which does not entail a sacrifice of his place in history, modern man is asked to accept the imagery of the New Testament on par with the content. Such imagery, according to Bultmann, belongs to a view of the world which is obsolete; moreover, such imagery is not in itself Christian. The setting of the proclamation, of the Kerygma, because of its immediate requirement to be believed, obscures the relevant message of the New Testament.

We have said that this impetus to clarify the New Testament message was not novel. Others in the early centuries of the faith, the adoptionists, the allegorists, and, in the 19th century, Strauss, the liberals (Harnack) and the history of Religion

School (Troeltsch) were desirous of relating the New Testament message in a changing world. Bultmann and Strauss recognise these attempts and they each criticise them from their separate perspectives. Bultmann is, of course, dependent on these earlier attempts for much of his critical data, and especially for the problems which these demything efforts clarified and for the ones which were left in some ambiguous manner. All of these prior demything schemes failed, according to Bultmann, in one respect: they made the New Testament proclamation into some timeless truth or truths which were independent of the temporal setting in the New Testament and divorced from the person and work of Jesus the Christ. Such is the delicate balance which Bultmann must maintain in his plan. On the one hand, how to relate the message of the New Testament in a way which will facilitate its being heard in the 20th century, and on the other hand, how to maintain the historicity of the message and its birth in the Christ and in the first community. It may be simply said in the light of our historical survey: How to relate the origin and the development of

the New Testament message was the problem which faced Bultmann in his inquiry. Modern science and modern man's understanding of himself required the New Testament message or its advocates to take into consideration the development which had occurred in the interpretation of history and the natural order. Yet, the proclamation itself, the eventful, or the "mighty acts" must not be forfeited in the restatement. F. Strauss' understanding of the New Testament, as we have shown, compromised the "acts" for some intellectualistic understanding. That is to say, everything which was identified with the initial faith of the disciples and the message of the Christ was sacrificed to the fuller and more perfect knowledge and objectivity gained in the idea of self-consciousness. The Straussian-Hegelian man was divided and his world was fragmentised. A split was made between religion and science, faith and knowledge, in their static synthesis. But, Bultmann attempts to avoid such a dichotomy wherein knowledge is derived after passing through the dark night of irrational faith. Objectivity, in the strictly empirical sense of that term, and faith are reconciled in

his mind, if not always correlated in his theology. There is no step up from faith to knowledge. The objective relationship of man to his world around him and the existentialist conception of his history are both incumbent upon him. There is no irreconcilable division between development and origin or between knowledge informed by the tools of science and philosophy and faith informed by the same desire to see itself related to its world and the object of its concern vis á vis God. The division between science and faith takes place, at least for Bultmann, at the level of application of the data of science.

Bultmann quarrels with the idealists, whether in a Hegelian or "Quest of the Historical Jesus" guise. Harnack, in his concern for the religion of Jesus, strips the New Testament of its place in history by extricating timeless ethical truths from what he considers to be the temporary expressions. Thinking himself freed from all the hodge-podge of metaphysical abstractions surrounding the Christ in the creeds and in the New Testament, Harnack isolated the historical ideas associated with Jesus, only to make these thoughts as abstract and doctrinaire as those which had been rejected.

Any careful student of the 19th century and early 20th century, and particularly of the efforts to rehabilitate the New Testament message, is aware of the problems which face Bultmann in his enterprise, and, according to one interpreter, "the problem of the mythological way of talking in the New Testament can be solved not against Bultmann, but only with Bultmann."⁹ That is to say, future efforts to refurbish the Christian faith which are motivated by a concern that the message should be heard in the idiom which modern man can understand, are by necessity dependent on Bultmann's handling of the mythological and his solution to the problem. While some would reject Bultmann's exposition of the problem and the solution which he offers, the delineation of the way mythology is to be interpreted in the biblical writings must give attention to Bultmann's scheme.

We made a leading statement in our discussion a few paragraphs back. Bultmann is dependent, as future discussion will be upon him, on the early attempts at demythologizing for much of his critical data, and especially for the problems which these demything efforts clarified and raised. In the

9. Backhaus, Gunther, "Kerygma Und Mythos: Bei David Friedrich Strauss Und Rudolf Bultmann" - page 76.

light of these efforts and the one-sidedness of their solutions, Bultmann has certain obvious questions raised for him. Moreover, much of the ground covered by Strauss in his efforts to prove the existence of myth in every section of the New Testament and to discern the origin of such mythical data did not require Bultmann's attention. While correcting Strauss' preference for the mythical forms stemming from the Old Testament in his broader view of the mythical data used by the New Testament writers, Bultmann did not have to wage a battle for the acceptance of the presence of myth in the New Testament. Furthermore, the historicity of the documents and of the figure of Jesus of Nazareth had been ascertained. Neither concerns the presence of myth in the New Testament or the historical features in the New Testament, require Bultmann's consideration. On the one hand, it is not incumbent upon Bultmann to discuss the presence of myth in the writings or to unfold the origin of the mythical material. Though, as we shall note, his utilisation of other literature and popular miracle stories concurrent with the

New Testament make for a better understanding of the New Testament world and the consequent transformation and demythologization of these forms in the Pauline and Johannine writings. Unlike Strauss, Bultmann does not confine the myth forms to the Old Testament and, moreover, contrary to Strauss, he does not make use of the myth to explain the New Testament texts. He advances to a literary critique of the sources and forms with the purpose of discussing the content of the myth. The myth, according to Bultmann, does not produce the Kerygma, it explains it. The myth in Strauss served as a point of departure to illuminate the Kerygma, and, because the myth was questionable, the Kerygma could be invalidated by Strauss' reliance on Hegelian ideas. It is not the historicity nor the mythical setting of the Kerygma which is decisive in Bultmann's view; on the contrary, it is the content of the Kerygma - one might say, the essence of the Kerygma which is primary in Bultmann's theology.

On the other hand, the liberal quest for the validation of the historical significance of Jesus and of the New Testament documents was in the

background. As the battle had been waged for the acceptance of the history, Bultmann did not have to fight over old battlefields. His form critical interest and his predilection for viewing the documents and the arising of them as historical, do not require him to be jealous to prove his starting point in the New Testament. His problem is to show that, when the historical or probable historical is acknowledged, this does not constitute the basis of genuine faith. The late 19th century liberals (Harnack, Ritschl and others) were intent on showing that the dogma did not constitute the necessary foundation of faith, while Herrmann and Bultmann are intent on demonstrating that the historical facts (in vacuo), so painstakingly uncovered by the portraits of the Life of Jesus and in the Ritschlians, do not form the groundwork for faith. It is not the past event which presents the stumbling block, nor the immunisation of these sacred facts from criticism which offers a defense for the faith. On the contrary, it is not the "back behind the historical Jesus" to the pure teachings or to the cosmic process which initiated these events. The "proclamation of the word", the Kerygma, is an eschatological event, an ever-

present announcement and address of God to man. The Bible is not primarily a historical document. History, according to Bultmann, in the sense in which that term is used in connection with the New Testament message, does not bear the same connotation it has in a phrase like "the history of Anglo-German relations."¹⁰ The Bible is supremely the Word of God before us. That is to say, we are met by a Word which makes quite a definite claim on us. It raises the claim not in the first place to be judged, but to be heard. The content of the Kerygma is decisive. The Now of the Kerygma (2 Cor. 6:2) is not purely fortuitous, but identical with the advent of Jesus and his passion. According to Bultmann, "The reliability of the Kerygmatic tradition must not be questioned, for otherwise the eschatological event to which the Kerygma testifies would be implicated in the relativity of all historical knowledge."¹¹ It is in the interests of the Kerygma - an interest which is motivated by the claims of science and modern thought-- which makes it imperative to elucidate the mythological in the New Testament. It is the content of the Kerygma and the character of the relation of man to it which must be communicated. Faith, in other words,

10. Bultmann, R. "Kerygma and Myth" - p.111.

11. Ibid., p.116.

must unfold its relationship to Christ. While science and modern philosophy force this understanding upon Christians, these disciplines, according to Bultmann, are a corrective and a guide. "Modern thought," so Bultmann contends, "as we have inherited it, provides us with a motive for criticising the New Testament view of the world."¹². The disciplines of modern thought are not the ultimate criteria for making the faith intelligible. This criteria and urgency spring from within the faith itself. There is, according to Bultmann, a new understanding of self and its relationship to God and the world unfolded in the New Testament Kerygma,¹³. and, moreover, this understanding of self is implicit in the announcement and address of God to man through the Word of preaching. Self-understanding, while essentially the same in every age, is expressed in a time-historical conceptuality which must be considered. Bultmann's central statement which inaugurates his demythologizing inquiry is given by Backhaus. Bultmann writes: "Every explanation of the saving events and the Christian existence completes itself in the conceptuality in the time

12. Ibid., p.4.

13. Ibid., p.15.

concerned; since it is always talk about man and his world, it moves in the traditional anthropology and cosmological conception."¹⁴.

(In German: "Jede Explikation der Heilsgeschichte und der Christlichen Existenz vollzieht sich in der Begrifflichkeit der betreffenden Zeit. Da sie immer auch Rede über den Menschen und seine Welt ist, bewegt sie sich in den traditionellen anthropologischen und kosmologischen Begriffen.")

Before inaugurating our discussion of Bultmann's description of myth and the attention which we shall want to give to the criteria for understanding the application of myth, i.e., modern science and philosophy, let us take stock of our argument to this point. Bultmann has had certain problems posed for him by previous demythologizing efforts. He erects his scheme on the results of these efforts and seeks to correct many of their solutions, particularly the compromise of the Christian message and the ultimacy being given to the prevailing thought patterns which initiated these inquiries. Bultmann's methods presuppose the ground covered by Strauss and late 19th century liberals. He is not concerned with the origin of myth and validating the existence of myth in the New Testament. Nor is he concerned to discard

14. Backhaus, Op. Cit., p.41.

and eliminate any thought in the New Testament merely because these thoughts conflict with modern science. Unlike Strauss, who had discovered the presence of myth in certain sections of the New Testament, and who was intent on the basis of his adopted scientific canons, to distinguish between the various mythi and arrive at some historical groundword,¹⁵ Bultmann sees myth in every part of the New Testament. He makes no attempt to separate the mythical and historical. Unlike his liberal predecessors who were concerned to isolate the objective historical from the subjective opinions in the New Testament, Bultmann's demythologization transcends this particular interest. His concern, we may cautiously remark at this point, was in an extension of the historical to cover the character of existence as such. The past is not the sole area of time which is historical. The present and the future are historical and God's address and

15. We will recall that Strauss was intent on isolating the historical features of the New Testament in his later period, particularly in his "Popular Life of Jesus for the German People" (1864). In this work, he ethicises the life of Jesus and attempts to portray Jesus as a prophet and a moral hero.

man's reception and decision is a historical phenomenon which occurs in space-time.

But, as we have shown, while learning from these previous efforts to relate the New Testament to man's changing cultural climate, Bultmann's primary concern was the nature of faith. What occurred in faith? What happens when man is addressed by the Word which meets him as a historical announcement, which, moreover, encounters him in and through the outward events of history, and which, furthermore, comes to him as a present demand and promise? While it is important to discuss Bultmann's demythologization of the New Testament and how he uses modern tools to clarify the message of Christianity, one cannot understand Bultmann without some attention being given to his theological assumptions. We believe Bultmann's theology to be vulnerable just at the place where we criticised the Ritschlians, viz. the preponderating influence of the imperative over the indicative and the slight interest in and concern for any cosmic or universal significance or setting of the Christian faith. Bultmann's Christology, however one may appraise his demythologizing scheme, is inadequate. The New Testament message does

present man with a new understanding of himself and his place in the world, but that announcement receives virtually no place in Bultmann's theology. That is to say, he eschews, like the Ritschlian school, any interest in the "cosmic" significance of this "announcement". Bultmann may be concerned with the "demand" inherent in the announcement, but he does not interest himself in the "announcer", vis a vis the Person of Christ. The being of the Christ precedes His words, though that is not to infer that either can be separated as Bultmann tries to do in his theology. This "existential liberalism", according to Paul Tillich, "cannot answer the question of wherein lies the power to obey the teachings of Jesus or to make the decision for the Kingdom of God....The Cross is the symbol of a gift before it is the symbol of a demand."¹⁶

The above remarks are an indication of the basic criticism which will be offered of Bultmann's theology - a criticism which is relevant to his demythologizing of the New Testament. It is not certain how one should interpret the cosmic symbolism in the New Testament, but we are certain it serves a more positive role than Bultmann assigns it in his theology. Admittedly, much of the thought

16. Tillich, Paul, "Systematic Theology" - Vol. II
p. 106.

patterns in this connection stem from Gnosticism and the mystery religions in the first century world, but this type of symbolism, if interpreted along the lines suggested in Paul Tillich's theology, is as necessary as the ethico-religious symbolism which Bultmann reinterprets so expertly in his Biblical theology.

B. The Problem of Demythologizing: The Interpretation of Myth in Bultmann's Theology.

Bultmann's central statement, according to Backhaus, was: "Every explanation of the saving events and the Christian existence completes itself in the conceptuality in the time concerned, since it is always talk about man and his world it moves in the traditional anthropological and cosmological conception."¹⁷. There is, as we can discern, an interest in the addressee - in the one receiving and interpreting the "announcement" - whether in the first century or in the present century. With this understanding of self and world, expressions are given to the meaning of the "address" and the nature of the "Addresser".
When man meets the interpretation of the self-understanding derived from the "announcement" on

17. Backhaus, op.cit. p.41.

the pages of the New Testament or in the Word of preaching there is the imagery of the world conveyed along with the message. Is this imagery the content of the message? Did not the pagans in the first century imbibe the same "Weltanschauung"? Is there something particularly revelatory in the tripartite world view or in the idea that the beyond exercised Himself or Itself on the plane of history in some miraculous, demonstrable fashion? Bultmann thinks not. If the Kerygma conveys a particular content, not, however, timeless truths, can this content or understanding be demythologized or deobjectified from the surrounding time-conceptuality (der Begrifflichkeit der betreffenden Zeit)? This is Bultmann's belief and we shall describe his method of precluding the mythology while interpreting it.

C. Description of Myth:

Possibly our best course is to try to understand how Bultmann uses myth in his writings. Bultmann's various interpretations of myth, possibly because he leaves gaps in his own use of the noun "myth" and the two adjectives "mythical" and "mythological", have received numerous criticisms, and, to this

writer, unfortunate misunderstandings have arisen. We shall want to show that Bultmann has, despite his much talked about dual conception of myth, a unitary or bi-polar view of myth. He is intent on distinguishing his use of myth as a mythological way of approaching reality from the mythical way of approach. The mythical approach on the one hand, is essentially the Platonic, Hegelian-Straussian understanding. The myth in this classical sense is a form of the truth or the Idea, a mere copying of the truth which can be dispensed with when abstract thought intervenes. And, on the other hand, Bultmann is intent on revealing that the mythical approach to reality has become circumspect on the basis of a view of the world which leaves no room for the arbitrary interventions into history and nature of a transcendent, observable force. But, before we can discuss Bultmann's so-called dual use of myth in his 1941 essay "New Testament and Mythology", we should consider his early usage of myth in his "Geschichte der Synoptischen Tradition", and in his volume of essays, "Glauben und Verstehen".

In these early works, myth is for Bultmann almost exclusively a history of the gods (story of gods). The content taken over from materials which

deal with gods and their fate counts as myth. So, for instance, in 2 Cor. 2:6-9, mythological conceptions are at the bottom of it. The mythological divine being deceives the demon and leads his own ones to Heaven. In 1 Cor. 15:20-22, the myth of primeval man is applied, as also the Johannine way of expressing the raising. These motifs, according to Bultmann, belong to Gnostic mythology. According to him, the Gospel of John leans on the revealer myth of Hellenistic Gnostic literature when he reports in his prologue of that "between being" which existed with God from the beginning and now, for the sake of the redemption of man, became man. The myth is, accordingly, characterised by its depicted content.

Bultmann, so it would appear in his early conception of myth, is not interested in the meaning of the content in a specifically Christian sense. The myth is conceived purely materially and this means that it stands near the Straussian conception. Both theologians look around for parallels in the extra-biblical religious history in order to find on what basis myth is present, though Strauss, as we noted, confined his source pretty much to the Old Testament. The material

myth idea, i.e., fantasies of man or the stories of gods, is not new. One must merely distinguish that Strauss first of all on the basis of his understanding of natural law and its consequent invalidation of history which was "unthinkable" and incomprehensible, introduced the myth idea in order to explain the origin of myth and its presence in the text. Bultmann compares immediately and thus finds out where myth is present. The result, meanwhile, is the same.

But, this is different in Bultmann's essay "New Testament and Mythology", which was published for the first time in 1941. This controversial document set forward his demythologizing thesis and described what we shall term his "historicising" of the mythical material in the New Testament, particularly in the Pauline and Johannine literature. Bultmann is here working with a myth idea which is certainly prepared and sometimes applied in his earlier writings but, according to his conception, is completely new, at least as far as its application within theology is concerned. The decisive factor in the emphasis of the myth has shifted considerably - indeed it is expressly represented that the ideas can be easily traced back to the historical

mythology of the Judaistic apocalyptic and Gnostic redemption myths, but that is by no means decisive and final. Rather, according to Bultmann's own definition, the following has become decisive. Mythology is the manner of imagining in which the unworldly divine appears as worldly. God's beyondness is thought of and expressed in spacial categories. Myth, in the sense in which Bultmann is now describing, speaks of the supermundane power in terms of worldly space. Transcendence is described as remoteness in space, projected above or beneath the earth. The transcendent power is perceived in an anthropomorphic perspective as an immanent, though highly exalted reality. Doubtless, this is done contrary to the intention of mythological speaking. But, the kind of imagination and terms employed transmute transcendence into immanence, so that even gods are represented as some kind of supermen. God above in heaven, his omnipotence and omniscience, is distinguished from mankind here by means of this "omni", i.e., by means of quantity and not by quality.

But, this type of objectivisation can no longer be achieved by modern man. He cannot, on the basis

of his scientific view of the orderliness of nature and history accept this obvious way of personalising the activity of God. With the differentiation in modern science between the sphere of the natural and supernatural, and the consequent denial of the habitation of the divine in some transcendent world above nature, it is imperative, according to Bultmann, that theology demythologise or deobjectify this obsolete mythology. If science is offended by this picture of things, faith, even more so, is jeopardised by its reliance on this manner of describing its relationship to, and the activity of, the transcendent. A description of God in this natural-supernatural way leads eventually to some sort of deism, or to a limitation of God's activity in the world. He can only act miraculously or acknowledge Himself in some demonstrable fashion in this dualistic ontology. God is for Bultmann active, present and transcendent, but not the same manner in which He is spoken of in the world-picture in the New Testament.

The reader will note that we have not described Bultmann's view of myth as two-fold which he,

according to some interpreters, does not harmonise in his 1941 essay. The other view of myth - Bultmann's initial definition before he described the content of myth, i.e., a manner of speaking of the unworldly divine - concerns the primitive, pre-scientific picture of the world met in the New Testament. This primitive science believed that the world was governed by supernatural powers, by gods and demons who rule the history of men and nature. The world is viewed as a three-storied structure with the earth in the centre, the heaven above, and the underworld beneath. The upper level is the home of Gods and angels and the lower level is the residence of the demons and the place of torment, while the centre of these two spheres, the earth, is the scene of the continuous activity and conflict of God and Satan. These supernatural forces intervene in the course of nature and in all men think and will and do.¹⁸

But, according to Bultmann's interpreters, these two views of myth, i.e. as primitive science on the one hand and as a way of speaking of the other world in terms of this world and of the gods in terms derived from human life on the

18. Bultmann, "Kerygma and Myth" - p.1.

other, are in radical conflict. Is not, according to the majority of the commentators in "Kerygma and Myth", (Vol. I), the second way the only way of talking about mythology, and, moreover, **has** Bultmann not capitulated to modern science, allowing its view of the world to determine what is acceptable and non-acceptable as history and as Kerygma? These are delicate questions which have occupied many serious theologians, and not only those interpreters who reject Bultmann's scheme before subjecting it to criticism.

Some pages back, before elaborating the second view of myth in Bultmann's essay - the view which he enunciates first - we voiced the belief that, however Bultmann interprets himself in his treatise, and despite the loopholes left for misunderstanding, he unified the two views of myth or held them in unity in his mind. That is to say, myth as primitive science and myth as objectifying the transcendence of God are not contradictory or conflicting descriptions. There has been so much emphasis placed on the two apparent views that any harmony between them at this stage is scarcely possible. But, it is encouraging to note that some interpretations of Bultmann's descriptions of myth attempt to mitigate this confusion. Erick

Dinkler's article "Existentialist Interpretation of the New Testament" and Gunther Backhaus' periodical, "Kerygma Und Mythos: Bei David Friedrich Strauss Und Rudolf Bultmann", lead us out of this realm of confusion. Dinkler, on the one hand, points out that in a recent clarification of his argument, Bultmann seeks to show that his two descriptions of myth in the 1941 treatise refer to one and the same thing. The first definition, i.e., myth as primitive science, is, therefore, only a special aspect of the second definition, i.e., as a way of describing the other-worldly in terms of this world. The two conceptions, the primitive world view and the manner in which one must describe the activity of God in this time-conceptuality of the period, are one and the same thing. Backhaus does not enter into the various shades of Bultmann's expression of his formal definition of myth. Instead, Backhaus elaborates the material definition, i.e., story of the gods, and contrasts Bultmann's later conception.

Another related question which is raised in Bultmann's conception of myth and its manner of describing the superhuman and the activity of God in the world, concerns the conflict between modern

science and myth. Does Bultmann, like Strauss, use the 19th and 20th century scientific picture as an ultimate criterion for the truth of the Christian faith? Strauss, we recall, made modern science, along with the understanding of reality derived from Hegel, the final norm. Unless an event or the description and interpretation of the events conformed to the canons of modern science, it could not stand in the record. With very few incidents measuring up to this rigorous test, Strauss attempted to revive the faith by showing that it was not really dependent on the inept images and probable historical detail. For him and Hegel, the validity of the Christian message was certified by the idea of the union of the finite and infinite which was already a possibility in human consciousness. Salvation, for Strauss, lay in self-awareness of the potential reconciliation between the phenomenal and ideal. His speculative theology had decided in advance what was ideal and what was phenomenal, although he used the canons of science to give his argument some documentary value.

Does Bultmann employ the canons of science in this eliminating fashion? Many competent

interpreters of Bultmann believe that there is a "hangover of liberal modernism"¹⁹ in his devaluation of miracles. In his decision in advance, according to Dr. Macquarrie, "That in this scientific age we cannot believe in miracles, (Bultmann is) bringing in some sweeping assumption to show that it (the resurrection) could not have taken place."²⁰ While not, at this point, discussing Macquarrie's central point, i.e., the division which Bultmann makes between an objective-historical and an existential-historical event, we are concerned to show that Bultmann, while being influenced by the modern scientific picture, does not allow, as Strauss and others have done, this picture to determine his Christianity. His demythologising scheme recognises that modern science, regardless of its use of myth and symbols, e.g., "totality" and "source",²¹ does not have a place for myth in the way in which he describes this term. The scientific world view of the 19th and 20th centuries, or any future century picture of the world, cannot be called mythological in the specific meaning of the term, since the decisive feature is missing, namely, the idea that unexplainable phenomena are

19. Macquarrie, John, "Existentialist Theology" - p.186.

20. Ibid., p.186.

21. Bultmann, R. "Kerygma and Myth" - p.103.

perceived as the immediate breaking-in of transcendent powers.

Primarily, Bultmann's intention, so he informs us in many sections of his 1941 essay, is to demonstrate that the truth of the Christian Gospel is independent of any world view, either past, present or future. This independence of the Kerygma from the time-conceptuality expressed in an anthropomorphic and cosmological framework, does not, on the one hand, imply the "timelessness" of the "proclamation", that is if timelessness means a denial of the specific, concrete quality of the address of God to man; nor on the other, does Bultmann consider the primitive world view **and** the expression of the character of the activity of God binding upon one who attempts to understand the content of the Kerygma. Bultmann rejects the binding nature of the forms, for instance, as they are understood by Paul Minear. Minear writes: "The key words (terms, symbols and conceptions in the New Testament) are the structural girders that support an entire edifice of thought. They bear not only their own weight, but a mammoth construction of assumptions, implications and affiliations."²¹ There is,

21. Minear, Paul, "Some Eschatological Quandaries - and How they Grew"; unpublished paper, 1947, quoted in Wilder, Amos, "Eschatology and Ethics"- p.66. Refer to Minear's "Eyes of Faith" for further elucidation of the distinctive character of the outlook of the men of the Bible.

according to Minear, a language distinctiveness about the New Testament outlook which cannot be translated without falsification. But, this stifling, static view of theological concepts, however sacred these forms have become, and however fundamental they may be in dogmas and devotional language, is theological suicide. This view of theological language is a type of biblicism, however sophisticated it may be in Minear's writings. He and others reject the task which Bultmann and Tillich in our period set themselves to, namely, to use terminology which may appear alien to the New Testament in order to clarify the words which have in the course of time become bound in a fixed false sense. Bultmann realises that, when he succeeds in bringing the old terms of the Bible back to their original meaning, and faith means no longer the agreement with certain metaphysical views, but, rather, the existence from God and towards God, then the expressions taken over have made themselves superfluous. Paul Tillich's theology is evidence that at least another eminent theologian does not ascribe to Minear's petrifying view of theological symbolism. This sort of

emphasis on the "girders" of the faith is a dogmatic idea which, if endorsed by Christendom, cuts the dialectical position - the yes and no relationship - which the Church stands to the world.

Bultmann is accused of allowing a contemporary world view to dominate and decide his interpretation of scripture, and doubtless there are instances in his Biblical Theology which substantiate this accusation. But, if this is the case, Bultmann is contradicting himself at the very base of his interpretation of Christianity. A typical expression of this basal point in his theology may be lifted from his second volume of his "Theology of the New Testament". He writes: "The demand for faith, therefore, is the demand that the world surrender the understanding it has had of itself hitherto - that it let the whole structure of its security which it has erected in presumptuous independence of the Creator fall to ruins. The inner unity of this demand with Paul's conception of faith is clear in spite of its orientation against other antitheses than his. Faith is turning away from the world, the act of desecularisation, the surrender of all seeming

security and every pretense, the willingness to live by the strength of the invisible and uncontrollable. It means accepting completely different standards as to what is to be called death and what life... Faith, then, is the overcoming of the 'offense' - the offense that life meets man only in the word addressed to him by a mere man - Jesus of Nazareth. It is the offense raised by a man who claims, without being able to make it credible to the world, that God is encountering the world in him. It is the offense of 'the word became flesh'.... As an overcoming of the offense and as a decision against the world faith is desecularisation, transition into eschatological existence. In the midst of the world the believer is lifted out of secular existence - though he is still 'in the world', he is no longer 'of the world' (John 17:11,14,16).²².

Clearly, it is not the world view of modern science, neither of Gnostic dualism or Judaistic eschatology, which determines the content of the Kerygma. Christianity is not a world-view. This point, to risk a comparison, has certain affinities with Tillich's belief that Christianity is not a religion.

22. Bultmann, Rudolf, "Theology of the New Testament" - Vol. I, p.75-76, 78f.

Possibly our argument to the effect that Bultmann's dual conception of myth is really a bi-polar view and that his estimation of the primitive scientific picture of the world as obsolete does not capitulate to the canons of modern science should receive some more clarification. Let us glance at another source which motivates his "demythologisation" and his re-interpretation of myth in the New Testament, namely, his philosophical roots. Dr. John Macquarrie's expert book "Existentialist Theology: A Comparison of Heidegger and Bultmann", undertakes an analysis of the thought patterns which Bultmann imported into his theology. Macquarrie says that in utilising philosophical concepts in a presentation of the Christian faith, Bultmann is simply following the precedent of some of the greatest theologians of the past. Unlike Ritschl, Herrmann and Barth, Bultmann admits his indebtedness to philosophy and is at pains to tell us how his philosophical ideas influence his theology. In Bultmann, through his adoption of existentialist categories, there is a legitimate effort to analyse the constitution of the being of man. But, Bultmann's theology, according to Macquarrie, is

particularly vulnerable by the over-emphasis which he gives to "those elements of Christian teaching which are especially congenial to the theologian's philosophical outlook, accompanied by neglect of anything that is not so congenial, with consequent distortion of the whole."²³.

The point which Macquarrie makes, could be made, and has been made, about every theological system, whether these systems, e.g., Ritschl, Barth, disclaim any interest in or relationship to Philosophy. It is to the credit of Bultmann and Tillich that they acknowledge the philosophical roots of many biblical terms however coloured their theologies may be by their philosophical persuasions. It is debateable that Bultmann makes, according to Thieliicke, "the content of the Word of God into a kind of enlightenment about himself, so that he can understand himself rightly before God."²⁴.

Macquarrie's analysis of Bultmann's indebtedness to Heidegger, while recognising the limitations of an existentialist reading of the Christian faith, places his finger on the place where Bultmann parts company with his adopted philosophy. "Bultmann is influenced by Existentialism and he makes no secret of it, as we know, but that does not prevent him

23. Macquarrie, op. cit., p.24.

24. Thieliicke, Helmut, "Kerygma and Myth" - p.

from seeing perfectly plainly the place where Christianity and existentialism part company, and the distinctive indispensable element in Christianity as a supernatural religion which no philosophy can supply."²⁵.

We are in two minds over Bultmann's relationship to existentialism. In the first place, we desire to disprove the claim made by many that he, like Strauss, capitulates to philosophy in his theology, and particularly, that he allows philosophy to take the place of the revelation in Jesus the Christ, or that he allows a negation of history in his concern for the Kerygma. In the second place, we are of the opinion that Bultmann's theology, whatever its roots and however he uses Heideggerian terms to clarify the Christian understanding of inauthentic man, fails to do justice to the cosmic, universality and ultimacy of the Christian faith. He may rely on Heidegger to assist him in his clarification of inauthentic man, but he, and this is our primary quarrel with Bultmann, continues the agnosticism characteristic of the Ritschlian epistemology, viz. God cannot be spoken of in his unrevealed character. We pause to make this separation, because we desire

25. Macquarrie, Op.cit. p.156.

to discuss Bultmann's relationship to existentialism from two angles, i.e., his relationship to Heidegger and his continuation of a Ritschlian motif, albeit in a different guise in his existentialist analysis of the Christian faith.

Returning to the point concerning Bultmann's subjugation of Biblical religion to existentialism, we may follow Bultmann in his initial essay on "demythologization". Bultmann knows the limitations of the existentialist evaluation of man, and no where is this more evident than in his views on the "nature" of man and whether this "nature" is realisable. Is all that is required to reach authentic being philosophical reflection? "Is it enough," asks Bultmann, "simply to show man what he ought to be."²⁶ Existentialist philosophy seeks, according to Bultmann, "to 'liberate' the true naturalness of man."²⁷ Man arrives at a form of self-awareness through philosophy which emancipates that self-commitment which is proper to man and enables it to attain to its full stature. Whether in an Hegelian, Heideggerian or Jasperian form, man is capable of self-awareness through resolving to be.. Jasper's position in this matter is ably summarised by

26. Bultmann, "Kerygma and Myth" - p.27.

27. Ibid., p.27.

Backhaus. We note in the following description, despite the different terminology, an essential Straussian-Hegelian belief. Backhaus writes: "For Jaspers, religion and philosophy are distinguished by the fact that religion is concerned with everything and philosophy with the individual things. The young Strauss in conjunction with Hegel also speaks of the difference between religious believers and philosophers. (Jaspers speaks for philosophers of the 'Enlightenment' while Strauss speaks of knowledge). More important: For Jaspers the central point of the Bible is the "consciousness of the inborn nobility of man created by God. This is the same as Strauss understands by the unity of divine and human consciousness, the human feeling of having an affinity with the divine. We have already shown that with this real revelation becomes unnecessary. This circumstance is also valid for Jaspers; who will not recognise the opposition of God and man."²⁸.

In this description of existentialism, it is not our purpose to compare Jaspers with Hegel and Strauss. We are interested in highlighting Bultmann's break with any form of Hegelianism or existentialism which minimises man's "fallenness"

28. Backhaus, Op. cit. p.67.

and the distance between man and God. What is the primary disagreement between Bultmann and the philosophy which he uses so well to describe man-in-the-world? According to Bultmann, "the point at issue is how we understand the fall."²⁹ Bultmann and his philosophical colleagues do not, according to him, disagree "that the authentic life is possible only because in some sense it is already a present possession. But, there is one difference - the New Testament speaks thus only to Christian believers, only to those who have opened their hearts to the redemptive action of God. It never speaks thus to natural man, for he does not possess life, and his plight is one of despair."³⁰ Are Bultmann's statements contradictory? Man, according to him, is aware of his authentic nature and man is fallen, totally. Bultmann distinguishes between theoretical and actual possibility in his understanding of the "nature" of man. The Fall has destroyed man's actual possibility. Man may know the good and yet depart from it and be powerless to attain it. "He is," according to Bultmann, "capable of knowing that his authentic life consists in self-commitment, but is incapable of realising it

29. Bultmann, Op. cit., p.28.

30. Ibid., p.28.

because, however hard he tries, he still remains what he is, self-assertive man. So, in practice, authentic life becomes possible only when man is delivered from himself. It is the claim of the New Testament that this is exactly what has happened. This is precisely the meaning of that which was wrought in Christ. At the very point where man can do nothing, God steps in and acts - indeed he has acted already - on man's behalf."³¹.

Before veering away from the point, we have seen that, by reference to Heidegger, Bultmann has been able to describe and clarify in non-theological language and in a non-mythological fashion, the concepts of 'sin' and 'faith'. The essential difference between Bultmann and Heidegger is the way man interprets his fallenness: Both know, according to Bultmann, the fall - the inauthentic life. The Christian interprets the analysis of existence which he shares with the existentialists in terms of alienation from God, whilst the existentialist interprets it in terms of man's alienation from himself. The existentialist may produce, as Bultmann acknowledges, a secularised version of the New Testament conception of faith and this, according to him, proves that there is nothing mysterious or supernatural about the

31. Ibid., p.31.

Christian life.³² But, the existentialist and theologian part ways on the evaluation of the inauthentic life and how one receives the authentic life.

We should take stock of our discussion before we move into another facet of Bultmann's theology. We set out to describe what we termed the bi-polar use of myth in Bultmann's "New Testament and Mythology". Because it appears that science determined what was myth in the New Testament, it was necessary to evaluate Bultmann's handling of science in his appraisal of myth in the New Testament. Then our enquiry was directed to another motivating force in his demythologising and theology, i.e., his use of existentialist philosophy. On both counts, we decided that Bultmann's task cannot be invalidated simply by accusing him of abdicating to the canons of modern thought, especially when his demythologizing plan is compared with Strauss' wholesale subjugation of theology to philosophy and science. We were not concerned to explore in detail the charges made against Bultmann's use of science and philosophy. We have merely taken notice of this criticism to move our exposition of Bultmann to another level.

32. Bultmann, "Kerygma and Myth" - p.26-27.

As was stated in our survey, we are interested in the bearing of Bultmann's demythologized Christianity and existentialist interpretation of myth on the cosmic understanding of the Christian faith. Integral to this concern, is the refusal to speak of God directly. As a preparatory step in the direction of clarifying our central concern, we will direct our attention to the two adjectives, mythical and mythological, in Bultmann's writings.

5. The Mythical and Mythological Approach to Reality.

It has been stated that Bultmann uses the two adjectives mythical and mythological ambiguously in his theology. He is intent, it would appear, on eliminating the mythical approach to reality, which includes for him all that is associated with the view that God acts in history in an obvious, demonstrable manner. This activity of God as a force penetrating into history and nature from an outer world is, according to him, damaging to the claims of faith and science, especially the former. Like Herrmann, his teacher, he is interested in the processes of faith and in the ways in which faith can be understood and communicated. For Herrmann,

it was the "inner life of Jesus" confronting man in the now, and, according to Bultmann, it is the Word of preaching that encounters man in the present; which, moreover, preserves the Christian message from the type of subjectivism and mysticism which characterised Herrmann's description. While carrying obvious differences in meaning, the underlying notion is the same. Man, according to Herrmann and Bultmann, is met in the now, where he stands in history, by a subject in history. Man is addressed not primarily through creedal concepts and doctrines which he must believe before he can hear and respond to the address. It is not incumbent on a being-in-history to believe the mythical processes, e.g., God becoming man, physical resurrection and ascension.

Bultmann's initial treatise, "New Testament and Mythology", and in his replies to his critics in "Kerygma and Myth", (Vol. I), and in his two volume "Theology of the New Testament", warrants a distinction being made between the two adjectives mythical and mythological. In these two expressions and through a careful survey of Bultmann's handling of the terms, we may estimate one of the central points which Bultmann appears to be making in his

understanding of myth in the New Testament. The distinction between ~~the~~ two adjectives may be said to constitute the positive and negative aspects of Bultmann's demythologized New Testament.

In his treatise, "New Testament and Mythology", it is implied, and the implications are supplemented in his other writings, particularly those concerned with Gnostic mythology, that the mythical material in the New Testament is any material or concepts drawn from a metaphysic which depicts the activity of God in the arena of history and nature in a demonstrable, objectified manner. This material in the New Testament, derived partly from Gnosticism and in part from the apocalyptic hopes of inter-testament Judaism, characterises God and man in a manner which, while being offensive to science, distorts a valid faith. In these categories, there is a split between God and the world which is healed when God enters history and nature as a mediating force between the forces of evil and the forces of good. Moreover, integral to this view of the mythical, is the world of primitive science. This mythical approach to reality obscures the content of the Kerygma, which content, according to Bultmann, is to express man's understanding of himself. Instead of this possibility, the terms

applied to the Deity, e.g., omnipotence, transcendence, judging God, etc., are understood in a literal, non-symbolic sense. These concepts are to be held, according to this view of reality, prior to an encounter with God. While, according to Bultmann, such attributes are in reality ways of speaking which depict man's knowledge of himself, e.g., "the man who speaks of God's omnipotence knows about his own powerlessness. Man knows about demands being made upon him when he speaks of a demanding God, of God as Judge; and from the knowledge of continually having demands made on him and of being unfulfilled comes his talking of God as the Holy One, and the demanding one...Man knows about his transient nature when he speaks of God's eternity and transcendence."³³. When one speaks of God in this manner, according to Bultmann, he is using the analogical approach. While Bultmann types this as the "analogical" approach in his paragraphs entitled "The Language of God",³⁴ in an essay in "Kerygma and Myth", we are, on the basis of the inherent division between the mythical and mythological in his analysis, justified in calling his approach the mythological instead of the analogical. At least, upon our

33. Bultmann, R., "Essays: Philosophical and Theological" - p. 94-96.

34. Bultmann, R., "Kerygma and Myth" - p.201.

reading, the two terms are synonomous. It is our purpose to make explicit this implied distinction between the mythical and mythological, and to suggest that this may be one reason for opposing Bultmann's understanding of myth in the New Testament.

Mythical means to Bultmann every idea and expression associated with an absolute view of faith. The mythical approach would objectify God in the world and speak of Him in an imagery borrowed from nature, e.g., substance, force, and energy. Furthermore, these untenable symbols bred superstition and encouraged idolatry.³⁵ That is to say, when man infers the freedom of God in some transcendent sphere from the absence of God in the here and now, he is speaking of God's transcendence in a sinful manner.

But, the mythological, analogical manner of speaking of God entails a speaking which is at the same time a talk of our own existence. Faith is, according to Bultmann and Herrmann, related to its object. As the ground and object of faith do not fall apart, but are identical, we cannot say what God is like in Himself, but only what he does to us. According to Bultmann, "in existential self-understanding there is an understanding not only of

35. Bultmann, "Essays"- p.107.

self, but also of the object of encounter, the person or environment which is encountered."³⁶.

"In existentialist self-understanding, we are," according to him, "met by a Word of God on a specific occasion and it is the Word of God not in virtur of the ideas it contains, e.g., the mercy and grace of God, but because it comforts man with mercy and grace in an address which encounters man again and again."³⁷.

Briefly, this is the interpretation which Bultmann places on the mythical approach to reality, and the mythical approach. He cites in his writings the historisation of many of the concepts borrowed from paganism and Judaism which Paul transforms, e.g., spirit, soma, cosmos, etc. To speak of God is to speak of man in the world who is addressed by God and encountered supremely in the act of revelation in Jesus Christ. The mythical is, moreover, the fantasies of man and a way of approach which perpetuates a knowledge of God which is of a type given in advance of faith. This mythical approach encourages the thought that faith consists of abstract propositions about God which are applicable and binding before submitting to the power of God which exercises His unique presence upon man here and now. Faith, according to Bultmann, transcends

36. Bultmann, "Kerygma and Myth" - p.201.

37. Ibid., p.207.

the classic rift of cause and effect, though not as in mythical thought.³⁸ The mythical approach to reality imagines the world to be torn asunder, whereas faith transcends this view as a whole when it speaks of the activity of God.

We may summarise the point of our argument. It appears that a distinction between mythical and mythological is made in Bultmann's writings. The mythical approach to reality is the type which Bultmann wants to exclude and the mythological mode is what he seeks to retain. He eliminates the cosmic mythology and objective knowledge of God associated in his mind with the mythical, only while retaining the mythological or analogical approach. In view of Bultmann's understanding of mythology, it seems unfortunate that the term myth is used in his treatise. In his desire to eliminate the conventional understanding of myth in the New Testament, viz. as an objective depiction of the activity of God, he incurs the criticism that his theology negates the legitimate place mythological thinking has in Christianity. Whatever the terms he employs to describe the place of concrete symbolism in the Christian Gospel, he is not, contrary to much modern opinion, abstracting the

38. Ibid., p.197.

Christian faith. That is to say, he is not translating the faith into some esoteric existential language. He intends to vitalise the faith by divorcing it from the conventional modes and grounding it in history as an address delivered to man in specific situations.

At this point, our exposition could veer away into many facets of Bultmann's thought, all of which are integral to an understanding of what he proposes in his reinterpretation of mythology. But, we are concerned with the distinction which he makes between mythical and mythological approaches to reality and the related thought that we cannot speak of God-in-Himself. By concentrating on the reception of the address of God, Bultmann has failed to complete the task of theology. Theological statements must be made about God, however symbolic they may be. The mythological approach to reality is incomplete without the mythical, or the approach which has the possibility of symbolising the content of the divine. While Bultmann has contributed to an understanding of the way in which man receives the Christ-event, his theology, because he neglects to speak of the being of Christ, is one-sided. In the remaining pages of our exploration of Bultmann's theology, we will refer to the theology

of Paul Tillich. Tillich's theology has been selected because, on the one hand, he agrees with the positive emphases in Bultmann's thought, e.g., reinterpreting the supranatural, the paradoxical presence of the divine in the sphere of history and the nature of Revelation as "encounter", "address", and not as propositions about past events; on the other hand, Tillich's theology moves beyond Bultmann's conception of the role of the symbolical and mythical. In view of our specific interests, we shall proceed in the following manner: first, the agreements between Bultmann and Tillich will be summarised, and secondly, the way in which Tillich assigns a more positive role to symbolism, in particular the way in which symbols may speak about God or God-in-Himself.

6. Paul Tillich's Understanding of Myth and Symbol:

A. Comparison of Tillich and Bultmann:

Tillich may be called, at least the Medievals would have had no hesitation in calling him, *Doctoris Consiliatoris* - the Doctor of Reconciliation. In a dispute., or when considering a theological problem, he never chooses one side to the exclusion

of the other, nor does he try to blend or force a union between opposites. His method is synthetic, and always he tries to uncover some deeper principle of which conflicting standpoints are instances, their conflicts arising, perhaps, from a too-one-sided emphasis of one part of the total picture. In his polemical or apologetic approach,³⁹ he correlates "questions and answers, situation and message, human existence and divine manifestation."⁴⁰ His polemical and dialectical approach in theology appears to gather all other areas of correlation into it. His method of correlation is, according to him, able to consider each opposing view and relate these views to some underlying principles.

We are not concerned to unfold Tillich's theology in these pages, nor are we proposing a detailed treatment of the place of symbols and myths in his thought. We are, as we have intimated, merely interested in two aspects of Tillich's theology. First, how does Tillich compare with Bultmann, especially in matters which Bultmann considers primary, and, secondly, how does Tillich's formulations of the problems move beyond Bultmann's.

In the first place, Tillich shares Bultmann's

39. Tillich, P., "Systematic Theology", Vol.I. p.6-8.

40. Ibid., p.8.

concern to relate Christianity to the modern mind. Like Bultmann, Tillich considers it idolatrous to identify the New Testament picture of Jesus the Christ with a world view which is obsolete - with a view of the world which relegates the Divine to a sphere above the natural world. In his second volume of his "Systematic Theology", he offers some clarifying words on how the natural-supernatural world view has plagued Christianity. While stating his opposition to this "Weltanschauung" in numerous places in his writings, his efforts to clarify his point of view in his second volume include much that he has written in other contexts. He writes: "The main argument against it (supranaturalism) is that it transforms the infinity of God into a finiteness which is merely an extension of the categories of finitude. This is done in respect to space by establishing a supranatural divine world alongside the natural human world; in respect to time by determining a beginning and an end of God's creativity; in respect to causality by making God a cause alongside other causes; in respect to substance by attributing an individual substance to Him. Against this kind of supranaturalism, the

arguments of naturalism are valid and, as such, represent the true concern of religion, the infinity of the infinite, and the inviolability of the created structures of the finite."⁴¹.

In this same context, Tillich broadens upon his negation of the objectified terminology which would conceive of the Divine inhabiting a localised sphere. "The traditional discussion between the naturalistic ideas of God uses the propositions 'in' and 'above' respectively. Both are taken from the spatial realm and, therefore, are unable to express the true relation between God and the world - which certainly is not spatial."⁴².

In Tillich's first volume "Systematic Theology", there are two further points which compare with Bultmann's emphases. In the first instance, Tillich articulates what remains implicit in Bultmann when he protests against the absolutism of the ways in which the Christ is conceived.⁴³ While the stories, legends, symbols, paradoxical descriptions and theological interpretations point to the Christ (New Being), "none of these expressions, the experience of final revelation, is final and absolute in itself. They are all conditioned,

41. Ibid., Vol.I. p.6.

42. Ibid., Vol.II. p.8.

43. Ibid., Vol.I. p.151.

relative, open to change and additions."⁴⁴ Tillich criticises Bultmann for identifying the meaning of Jesus with his message.⁴⁵

At another point, determinative for both theologians in their thinking on the contemporaneity of the Christ, the theologians agree in the emphasis to be placed on the receptive side of the Christian event. This receptivity of the event is implicit in Bultmann's consideration of the self-understanding which is part and parcel of the Christ-event. Neither theologians consider the factual side apart from the receptive and interpretative. Both have gone beyond the subjective-objective view of history in the Ritschlian school. That is to say, for Tillich and Bultmann, unlike Ritschl and, to some extent, Herrmann, the factual side is not the objective and the interpretative the subjective. Bultmann's kerygmatic theology and Tillich's apologetic approach have this in common: they emphasise, to employ one of Tillich's expressions, "the biblical picture of Jesus."⁴⁶ Faith does not guarantee the empirical factuality of the biblical material, nor does it rigidly endorse the interpretative symbols in the New Testament. Both, the fact and interpretation, are received together, both are historical. It is

44. Ibid., Vol.I. p.151.

45. Ibid., Vol.II. p.106.

46. Ibid., Vol.II. p.115.

not incumbent at this point to pursue the shades of meaning given this thought in Tillich and how Bultmann expresses himself in a similar vein.

The central point they share: Faith is not theoretical judgments of historical probabilities, belief in propositions or an endorsement of questionable symbols and myths or legends used by the original receivers of the Christ-event. Faith is a reality which concerns the totality of man's being. It is not a sacrifice of reason, but a transformation of the self or of self-understanding.

We may, perhaps, conclude our all too brief comparative section on this note. Bultmann and Tillich were nurtured in the same fires of historical criticism under the tutelage of Martin Kahler. Both men, in their separate ways, are continuing the mediating, reconciling approach in theology, though Bultmann does not broaden his apologetic to include as many areas as Tillich surveys. Both theologians are speaking to the challenges offered Christianity by science and philosophy. Tillich's theology is more receptive to philosophy than Bultmann's and, consequently, he extends his reconciling task to cover many disciplines, though the primary purpose of clarifying the Christian message remains central in his philosophical theology.

B. The Role of Symbolism in Tillich Theology:

Symbolism occupies such an important role in Tillich System and in his other writings, that one hesitates to embark upon an analysis of this theme, especially when we are not purposing to give a detailed estimation of his ontology. The subject of symbolism and the way in which Tillich has expressed the part which symbolism plays in Christology, has been the root of numerous adverse criticisms of his Systematic Theology. When he stated in the first volume of his "Systematic Theology" that Jesus as Jesus must sacrifice himself to the Christ in order to remain transparent to the divine mystery,⁴⁷ some critics, notably D.M. Baillie, accused Tillich of dissolving Jesus into a symbolic truth and thus removing the reality of Jesus.⁴⁸ In other words, in Tillich's view of the relationship of Jesus to the Christ, he could be called, according to his understanding of Baillie's criticism, a "docetic heretic."⁴⁹ The reason why this criticism is invalid depends on an understanding of the vital role given to symbolism in Tillich's theology. Possibly the point of Jesus sacrificing his finitude to the content of the revelation may receive some

47. Ibid., Vol.I. p.134.

48. Baillie, D.M., "God Was In Christ" - p.79.

49. Tillich, P., "Systematic Theology", Vol.II, p.96.
Lecture Notes transcribed by Peter John,
Spring, 1954, Union Theological Seminary.

clarification if we state a few of Tillich's words on the function of symbols in theology.

In the first place, he writes in his second volume...."everything religion has to say about God, including his qualities, actions, and manifestations, have symbolic character and that the meaning of God is completely missed if one takes the symbolic language literally."⁵⁰. Yet, according to Tillich, there must be a point where a non-symbolic assertion about God must be made. If this assertion is not made, symbolism would fall into a circular argument. The non-symbolic assertion about God is, according to Tillich, "the statement that everything we say about God is symbolic."⁵¹. The statement that God is Being-itself is a non-symbolic statement - the only one which theology can make. This unsymbolic statement is possible and necessary because it does not point beyond itself.

Having established in this one assertion about God the basis of his dialectical scheme of symbolic and non-symbolic statements, Tillich proceeds to illustrate why symbolic assertions are important and not, as many suspect, "non-real assertions."⁵². He tries to clear up these non-real connotations by pointing to the difference between sign and symbol and by endeavouring to show the realistic meaning of

50. Tillich, P. "Systematic Theology", Vol.II. p.9.

51. Ibid., Vol.II, p.9.

52. Ibid., Vol.I. p.241.

symbols while not identifying this realism with empirical reality.

In the first instance, religious symbols are double-edged, while signs are single-edged. Symbols depend on a correlation between the piece of reality used for symbolic purposes and the reality symbolised. That is to say, a segment of finite reality can become the basis for an assertion about that which is infinite because finite reality has the quality of participating in the reality for which it stands and to which it points. The double-edged nature of religious symbols, according to Tillich, is integral; for the finite reality is directed toward the infinite which it symbolises and toward the finite through which it symbolises the infinite..."the religious symbol, the symbol which points to the divine, can be a true symbol only if it participates in the power of the divine to which it points."⁵³.

A sign, on the other hand, according to Tillich, "bears no relation to that which it points."⁵⁴ The sign can be changed arbitrarily according to the demands of expediency, but the symbol grows and dies according to the correlation between that which is symbolised and the persons who receive it as a symbol.⁵⁵

53. Ibid., Vol.I. p.239.

54. Ibid., Vol.I. p.239.

55. Ibid., Vol.I. p.239.

What of the truth of the empirical assertions involved in a religious symbol? Is the truth of a religious symbol dependent upon the physical, psychological or historical assertions involved in the symbol? Tillich answers these enquiries in several contexts, but probably his most significant word occurs in the several pages we have been examining in his first volume. He writes: "A religious symbol possesses some truth if it adequately expresses the correlation of revelation in which some person stands. A religious symbol is true if it adequately expresses the correlation of some person with final revelation...The judgment that a religious symbol is true is identical with the judgment that the revelation of which it is the adequate expression is true. This double meaning of the truth of a symbol must be kept in mind. A symbol has truth: it is adequate to the revelation it expresses. A symbol is true: it is the expression of a true revelation."⁵⁶ Though Tillich provides for the displacement of certain symbolism in his emphasis on the correlation between symbol and that which it symbolises. Religious symbols may become obsolete when they fail to point to the revelatory correlation.

56. Ibid., Vol.I. p.240.

Symbols are determined by the transcendent reality they express. This is the one side. On the other, symbols are influenced by the situation of those for whom they point to this reality. "Theology," according to Tillich "must look at both sides and interpret the symbols in such a way that a creative correlation can be established between them."⁵⁷.

Another aspect of the double-edged nature of symbols is illustrated in what Tillich considers to be the two outstanding characteristics in the New Testament picture of Jesus the Christ. These are: "His (Jesus the Christ) maintenance of unity with God and his sacrifice of everything he could have gained for himself from this unity."⁵⁸. In other words, Jesus the Christ affirms his unity with the Father and yet, he renounced equality with God and refused to claim ultimacy for himself. Symbols are, according to Tillich, of this nature. They participate in the ground of being, are transparent to the revelation and yet, they deny that the segment of reality used to point to the ground of being is absolute. Any concrete assertion about God is symbolic; for it uses a segment of finite experience in order to say

57. Ibid., Vol.I. p.288-289.

58. Ibid., Vol.I. p.135.

something about him. The content symbolised transcends the segment, although it includes it. The segment of finite reality which becomes the vehicle of a concrete assertion about God is affirmed and negated at the same time. "It becomes a symbol, for a symbolic expression is one whose proper meaning is negated by that to which it points. And yet, it is also affirmed by it, and this affirmation gives the symbolic expression an adequate basis for pointing beyond itself."⁵⁹.

This point of the negation and affirmation quality of a symbol may receive additional clarification by reference to the symbol of a "related God." In relating to the creature, an aspect of God's relationship must be affirmed and denied. "It must be affirmed," according to Tillich, "because man is a centered self to whom every relation involves an object. It must be denied because God can never become an object for man's knowledge or action."⁶⁰. God is not, Tillich emphasises in many ways, an object alongside other objects. Yet, for man to be related, he must speak of being in communion with an object, though in reality he is related to a subject.

59. Ibid., Vol.I. p.237.

60. Ibid., Vol.I. p.271.

We should continue to elaborate Tillich's understanding of religious symbols and their primary function in his theology, especially the way in which they allow us to formulate statements about God. But, we must turn to some aspects of his theology which throw light on his use of myth.

Tillich describes his understanding of myth in his recent book, "Dynamics of Faith". In the course of a few pages in his discussion of symbols and myths, the basic difference between Bultmann and himself is elaborated. Tillich's definition of myth and the scope of myth in his theology differs from Bultmann. According to Tillich, "Myths are symbols of faith combined in stories about divine-human encounters."⁶¹ Man symbolises his ultimate concern in divine figures and actions. The "stories of the gods", the meaning of the Greek word "mythos", are part and parcel of the symbols of faith. These stories of the gods, according to Tillich, are drawn from the material of ordinary experience. In them, and this is why, according to him, they have been criticised and transformed, the gods are placed in a framework of time and space. But, since "it belongs to the nature of the ultimate to be beyond time and space,"⁶²

61. Tillich, Paul, "Dynamics of Faith" - p.48.

62. Ibid., p.49.

these stories must be interpreted. Even with the untenable division which the stories create between the various gods and with the limitary feature of the gods being confined to time and space, polytheistic and monotheistic myths have, according to Tillich, a positive function in religion. They "are forms of the human consciousness which are always present."⁶³.

Tillich introduces a terminology in his discussion of myth which he considers to be more relevant than the artificial and negative term "demythologisation". He speaks of a "broken" and "unbroken" myth. A "broken myth" is one that is understood as myth, not removed or replaced. A broken myth is one that has been interpreted - one in which the affirmation of the ultimate as ultimate and the rejection of any kind of idolatry has been made. While an "unbroken myth" is one in which there are more than one ultimates and one in which the "symbols and myths are understood in their immediate meaning. The material taken from nature and history is used in its proper sense."⁶⁴. In an unbroken myth, the symbol, to employ Tillich's distinction between an ultimate and preliminary concern,⁶⁵ is made ultimate. In this absolutism of the symbol, including its historical, psychological and

63. Ibid., p.50.

64. Ibid., p.51.

65. Tillich, "Systematic Theology", Vol.I. p.12-13.

cosmological ideas, "The character of the symbol to point beyond itself to something else is disregarded."⁶⁶ Tillich, together with Bultmann, regards the taking of the symbols in a literal fashion idolatrous. When the conditional is ultimatized, "it (faith) calls something ultimate which is less than ultimate."⁶⁷ But, "faith, conscious of the symbolic character of its symbols, gives God the honour which is due him."⁶⁸

We have reached a point in our brief outline of Tillich's conception of myth and symbol where we have, at least to some extent, described the use of these two concepts; moreover, we have related Tillich's "broken" and "unbroken" myth to Bultmann's scheme of demythologisation. It is evident that the two theologians are attempting to interpret biblical language in a similar fashion. They are intent on showing the relative character of much of the symbolism in scripture, especially the conditional nature of the material utilised in the symbolic expressions. It is not, for both theologians, rational or scientific criticism which constitute the primary norm for the reinterpretation of the symbols and myths, or for the breaking of the myths. On the contrary, it is the inner religious

66. Tillich "Dynamics of Faith" - p.51.

67. Ibid., p.52.

68. Ibid., p.52.

criticism of faith. The point that faith cannot rest with making conditional concerns in the symbols and myths unconditional is the central agreement between the two theologians.

But, our thesis **is this**: While both theologians demythologise, Tillich's theology offers a more constructive version of the Christian faith. His theology moves beyond Bultmann's in two respects: Tillich, in the first place, gives a more positive place to the mythical (using this adjective in the way we associated it with Bultmann's thought), and Tillich, furthermore, in giving the mythical material a more integral place in his theology, can relate the symbolism of the mythical, e.g., Gnostic cosmology, the fall of Adam and creation, birth, resurrection and ascension of Christ, to the mythological (using again the way we understand this adjective in Bultmann's thought).

The possibility of relating these two types of myth lies at the root of Tillich's ontology and his dialectical and correlative approach to theology. He is as vitally concerned as Bultmann with man's understanding of himself in and through the Word which addresses him in history. Revelation is, as he is careful to point out, not recollection,⁶⁸ nor is it a negation of the place

68. Tillich, "Systematic Theology", Vol.I. p.126.

where man stands, e.g., structure of ordinary language, rational structure of reality in which revelation appears. Tillich's ontology, without moving into any complex consideration of it, includes Bultmann's quite legitimate concern for the self-understanding which comes in the revelatory context though Tillich is anxious to say that something is said about God in the revelatory situation. In his positive concern for symbols and their place in theology, Tillich, through the interpretation which he places upon some of the obsolete myths eliminated by Bultmann, moves beyond Bultmann's anthropological theology to an ontological theology.

We will recall that our essential difficulty with Bultmann's demythologizing scheme lay in his reluctance to make theological, albeit symbolical, statements about God. Dr. John Macquarrie's critique of Bultmann is clarifying at this point. "Bultmann," according to Macquarrie, puts forward a view of theology which calls for radical demythologizing, and the translation of all transcendent statements about the understanding of the self."⁶⁹ But, while insisting that this understanding "is only made possible by the Kerygma

69. Macquarrie, John, "Existential Theology" - p.243.

and ultimately by the mighty acts of God in Jesus Christ,"⁷⁰ Bultmann is oblivious to the fact that "as soon as we speak of mighty acts or of grace or of revelation or of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, we are making or implying statements which are not statements about human existence, and we have abandoned the concepts of a purely existential theology."⁷¹ "Theology is," to employ another of Macquarrie's concluding remarks, "concerned not only with statements about human existence, but with statements about God and His activity as well as transcendent statements, if you like, which, because we lack categories for the understanding of transcendent being as such, can only be expressed in symbolic or mythical form."⁷² This is, then, the weakness in Bultmann's theology. While clarifying our understanding of man and giving valuable guides in understanding the functional significance of the Christ, viz., as an address to man in history which calls for an obedient response, Bultmann does not offer sufficient appraisal of the "being of the Christ," or of the one addressing man. Christology has two aspects: a functional and a sacramental. Neglecting the sacramental or "nature" of Christ in his inadequate appreciation of the role of symbolism,

70. Ibid., p.243.

71. Ibid., p.243.

72. Tillich, "The European Discussion of the problem of the Demythologization of the New Testament", Speech delivered Union Theological Seminary, 1952, stenographic copy made available for the audience, p.8.

even the symbols contained in the mythical materials he eliminates, gives Bultmann a one-sidedness which, despite his contributions, associates him with the Ritschlians.⁷³ Bultmann's anti-mystical and anti-philosophical bias, according to Tillich, "causes him to moralise Christianity."⁷⁴

While seeming to have moved away from our survey of the role of symbolics and mythology in Tillich theology, it was imperative that we focus again Bultmann's untenable approach. How then does Tillich's theology correct the limitation we have isolated in Bultmann's theology?

Tillich's correction of Bultmann's thought on the possible knowledge of God through symbolism and his reinterpretation of the mythical in his ontological approach is to be understood from a much wider perspective than we have time to explore in these pages. Without having to involve ourselves in the details of his ontology, we may make some further statements concerning the role of symbolism in Tillich's theology which are indicative of the broader framework of his thought.

The correlative value of symbols - their forcing of the infinite down to finitude and the finite up to infinity, and the way in which symbols serve

73. Ibid., p.8.

74. Tillich, "Systematic Theology", Vol.I. p.241.

both as a knowledge of the human and as a knowledge of God - may be described by referring to certain religious symbols, e.g., God as "father", God's work as healer, which Tillich interprets. The symbol "father", according to Tillich, consecrates a human relationship into a pattern of the divine-human relationship. The segment of finite reality, in this instance a human relationship, "is elevated into a realm of the holy. It no longer is secular."⁷⁴. Something is said about God through this symbol. Likewise, "if God's work is called 'making whole' or 'healing', this not only says something about God, but also emphasises the theonomous character of all healing. If God's self-manifestation is called 'the word', this not only symbolises God's relation to man, but also emphasises the holiness of all words as an expression of the spirit."⁷⁵.

It is, according to Tillich, the ontological structure of being which supplies the material for the symbols which point to the divine life. When these categories appear in the relation of God to the creature, the elements give symbolic expression to the divine life itself. These categories, individuality, dynamics, freedom, participation, form and destiny, are rooted in the divine life,

74. Tillich, "Systematic Theology", Vol.I. p.241.

75. Ibid., p.241.

though the Divine life is not subject to these polarities. When man uses certain forms taken from his own being, individualisation, freedom and dynamics, he realises, whether implicitly or explicitly, that the other side of the polarities, (participation, form and destiny), are present in the side he uses as symbolic material. While the symbols used for the divine life are taken from the concrete situation of man's relationship to God, they have the possibility of implying or pointing to the ultimacy of God. The infinite is "hidden" within the finite and the finite symbols may be transparent to the ground of being-itself.

In these foregoing remarks, we note the similarity between Tillich and Bultmann in one respect: they both are anxious to say that the ground and object of faith do not fall apart and that any speaking of God also entails a speaking which is at the same time a talk of our own existence. But, while both display a concern for the activity of God, his mercy and grace toward man, Tillich is interested to draw from the "encounter" and from the symbols used in the "meeting" between God and man, some statements about God - statements which will complete the theological task. It is not so much in the nature

of what statements about God are derived from the symbols used in speaking of the "meeting" between God and man which concern us. It is, as we have intimated, a necessity placed upon the theologian to speak about God.

In the speech Tillich delivered on the subject of demythologization which we have referred to, another essential difference between Bultmann and himself is made. He criticises Bultmann for the complete lack of cosmic symbolism as we find it in the Bible and Christian theology. He always, according to Tillich uses ethical symbolism.^{76.}

While Bultmann wants to say that Christ puts before us a concrete ethical decision, he is forced beyond the ethical to the cosmic if he would consider how Christ makes this ethical decision possible. Admittedly, one would want to criticise many aspects of Tillich's Christology, but that has not been our purpose in these pages. It was, to conclude our examination of Bultmann and the corrections made in Tillich's theology, to suggest the essential limitation and one-sidedness of Bultmann's theology. He fails to complete the theological task when he confines his interpretation of myth to the "mythological". In the mythological, according to Tillich, there is a relationship between God and man which enables man to make theological statements about God.

76. Tillich, Paul, The European Discussion of the Problem of the Demythologization of the New Testament, p.8.

CONCLUSION.

In the three sections of the thesis there has been a survey of the development of theological ideas around the relationship between myth and history. There were few efforts, especially in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century Christ-myth theories, to give 'myth' any positive place in theology. Myth was a tool to be used when certain historically transient thoughts were declared irrelevant. "The Movement away from History" in the Hegelians and Christ-myth school was projected along lines which were not entirely new. Each interpreter of the Christian message sought to free the message from the forms in which it had been previously interpreted. There was, to use Bultmann's phrase, a pre-understanding of the Christian faith as there is a pre-understanding in any interpretation of the faith. It was important to make some of these predispositions clear in our survey.

In the Hegelians - Strauss, Bauer and, indirectly, the later Christ-myth theorists - there was an understanding of the world which was, according to their interpretation, radically historical. History was the scene of the development of ideas. History

is, for these speculative thinkers, no longer considered simply incidental, as it was for the older rationalists in the eighteenth century. History is the place where the principle of the Divine Humanity is realised; the place where the eternal ideas pass through the stage of the antithesis, e.g., nature, the world and sundry contingent formulations, to the stage of the synthesis, vis á vis the complete embodiment of the Incarnation of God in History. While ostensibly giving history a place denied to it by the rationalists, viz. Lessing, the speculative theologians, in their concern for the ideas realisable in history, divorce the ideas from their particular embodiments. History may be the vehicle or the path in which ideas pass, "the slaughter-bench at which the happiness of peoples, the wisdom of States, and the virtue of individuals have been victimised,"¹ but History is a mere means which can be discarded as a homily, a sermon or a bygone dream (Strauss) when the idea is actualised. That is to say, history is the image which is displaced by the Idea coming to birth.

It would appear that the speculative theologians

1. Hegel, "Philosophy of History" - p.22.

in the early nineteenth century gave history a central place in their systems, but this is not the case. On the one hand, the goal to be realised in history, viz. the notion of self-consciousness, is severed from the ways in which self-consciousness arises in history. Yet, on the other hand, if themeans, the images and pre-rational understandings which arise in history or history itself appear to be given some place in Hegel and Strauss, this mode of representing things is stripped of its meaning. The Philosopher, in his ability to understand the movements of the Eternal Idea, does not need the objectified realisation of God in His Other, e.g., the Christ or the sensuous ways of conceiving of the Son, as the theologian. Philosophy knows the content of the Notion, its necessary movements, and the identity of God and the world. The Absolute Religion (Christianity) merely illustrates the moments of the Notion, fulfilling itself and returning to itself. According to Berdyaev, "there is nothing which is purely human (in the Hegelian system) distinguished from the divine and standing before God in a drama which is being played out."² Philosophy, according to

2. Berdyaev, "The Divine and Human" - p.30-31.

our interpretation of Hegel and Strauss, knows in advance of the antithetical relationship which God stands to the world, of the unity and necessity for this antithesis. Hegel writes: "The verification of Spirit cannot be simply asserted as if its truth was contained in such narratives regarding one who was represented as an Historical person and in a Historical fashion.... This truth, however, is pure and certain by itself, although it has an historical starting point."³.

The Christ-myth theorists, Bauer, Kautsky, J.M. Robertson, W.B. Smith, Arthur Drews and P. Jensen, boldly assert the non-existence of Jesus of Nazareth, but this assertion of the non-historicity of Jesus is indicative of their general interpretation of the historical. While being concerned with the truly historical which, according to these interpreters, does not entail a place in history for Jesus of Nazareth, they offer an interpretation of history which is, for the most part, unhistorical. Bruno Bauer's dialectic of the self, its alienation and reconciliation to the world, occurs in the realms of thought. That is to say, the drama and vicissitudes of history are negated. While being concerned to invalidate Jesus of Nazareth and to show Gospel history to be an imaginary embodiment

3. Hegle, "Philosophy of Religion", Vol. III, p.110

of a set of exalted ideas, it is in the last analysis the ideas which are the only historical reality.

Karl Kautsky's elaborate negation of Jesus in his "Foundations of Christianity" is merely a means by which he might secure a hearing for his Marxist interpretation of the historical. Kautsky's "inverted Hegelianism," whereby the processes of production determine the course of history instead of the Notion or triadic movement of the Divine Idea in history, is as divorced from the particularities of history, e.g. concrete embodiments in time and the place of the individual and his decisions, as was Hegel's philosophy of the historical. When Kautsky's economic conception of history posits the modes of production and consumption characteristic of the epochs in history, he is substituting an idea of history for the dramas in history. He is, like Hegel, eliminating freedom and all the fortuitious, capricious thoughts associated with freedom. The idea of the movements in the Divine (Hegel) and the idea of the processes of production is conceived along the lines of necessity. These movements and processes necessarily occur, despite the complexities and frictions in history.

J.M. Robertson, W.B. Smith, Arthur Drews and

P. Jensen, as far as we could determine their philosophy of history in their violent, sometimes absurd, denial of the historicity of Jesus, give an ideology of history. That is to say, like Hegel, Strauss, Bauer and Kautsky, it is the idea of History which is supreme. Robertson, Smith and Drews, convinced that the evolutionary hypothesis was the most valid method in the study of history, applied certain ideas to their study of historical phenomena. Whatever did not measure up to their preconceptions was outlawed.

The primary weakness in the systems included in the section "the movement away from History" is, as we have intimated in several contexts, lies in their conception of the historical. Any formulation or embodiment which did not measure up to their preconceived notions of the historical was declared mythical. Mythical or mythological material, according to these thinkers, was any material which was fictional, imaginary or ideas which were unconsciously given historical form.

In the weakness which characterised these systems one may isolate the strength or the positive contribution to historiography. I refer here to the necessity viewing isolated facts in history in some intelligible framework. The framework chosen

by the Hegelians, the Marxists and the evolutionists,, or, to use Tillich's terminology, the "centre of history"⁴ decided upon by these philosophers may underestimate the place of the concrete, the place of freedom and tragedy in time, but we are pointed to one side of the study of history: the interpretation of the events in history. The theologians in the late nineteenth century, the ones included in the second section, "the return to history" were in their emphasis on the facts of history, endeavouring to contest the various "centres" of history in the preceding points of view. While appearing to confute the idealists by stressing the empirical factuality of history, they were forced to devise some framework for the isolated events in history, viz. Ritschl's emphasis on the Kingdom of God and Harnack's three-fold essence of Christianity.

"The Movement away from History" depicted in the idealists in the first decades of the nineteenth century and in the Christ-myth theorists of the early twentieth century is a mythicising of history. History is myth; history is a mere image which is a stage of "real" history, vis a vis ideas comprehended in pure form. In a word, we have in these idealists an inverted understanding of history. History is an illusion while the idea of history

4. Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, p. 258.

history is the reality. The idea of history is the factuality of history, while the conventional understanding of history as facts, events in time and space is myth or illusionary.

In the "Movement Away from History" there are two discernible conceptions of myth. Hegel and Strauss believed that myth was an unconscious transformation of history into fabulous legend or fables accepted as historical. This pre-philosophical thinking "rests," to use the language of a contemporary advocate of this view of mythopoetic thought, "on a young and provisional form of thought, to which philosophy of nature - proudly called 'science,' or 'knowledge' - must succeed if thinking is to go on. There must be a rationalistic period from this point onward."¹

The Christ-myth theorists, following the examples of Herbert Spencer and Max Muller, concentrate on the view that myth is a product of a basic short-coming, an inherent weakness of language. The source of myth, at least for some of these theorists, was not the natural phenomenon itself, but, rather, the circumstance of language, its ambiguity. The mythical world is essentially a world of illusion - but an illusion that finds its explanation whenever the original, necessary, self-deception of the mind, from which the error

1. Langer, Susanne, "Philosophy in a New Key" - p.164-165.

arises, is discovered. And this self-deception, according to Muller, Robertson, Smith and others, is rooted in language. Ernst Cassirer summarises this point of view when he quotes from Muller's "The Philosophy of Mythology". Muller writes: "Mythology is inevitable, it is natural, it is an inherent necessity of language, if we recognise in language the outward form and manifestation of thought; it is, in fact, the dark shadow which language throws upon thought and which can never disappear till language becomes entirely commensurate with thought - which it never will. Mythology, no doubt, breaks out more fiercely during the early periods of the history of human thought, but it never disappears altogether. Depend upon it, there is mythology now as there was in the time of Homer, only we do not perceive it because we ourselves live in the very shadow of it, and because we all shrink from the full meridian light of truth.... Mythology, in the highest sense, is the power exercised by language on thought in every possible sphere of mental activity."²

The Christ-myth theorists, in order to clear up what was termed by Robertson to be an error of

2. Cassirer, Ernst, "Language and Myth" - p.5., Quoted from Muller, "The Philosophy of Mythology", appended to Introduction to the Science of Religion (London, 1873), p.353-355.

language, choose two related methods. It was thought that a clarification of names applied to the mythical gods would be a solution to the mythical parasites in language. And, Smith and Drews, in particular, attempt to resolve all mythology to a basic astral mythology - what the mythical consciousness derives from contemplation of the stars, what it sees in them directly. But, whatever interpretations they produce in their elaborate systems, it is detrimental to any realistic view of history, especially the Jesus of History.

The theologians considered in the second section of the thesis, "The Return to History", while seeking to do justice to the historical in Christianity, confuse revelation with history or with "the plain facts of history." In their efforts to oppose both the metaphysical formulas of ancient Christology and the idealist and speculative Christology of the first half of the nineteenth century, these "historicists" concentrate on the empirical factuality of the events in the first century. While the Ritschlians sought to correct the mistakes of the idealists, their thinking on the subject of history and myth is as

one-sided as the views they reject. On the one hand, by confining Christinity to the "historical Jesus", revelation becomes dated at an isolated point in the past. Moreover, in the isolation of revelation to the facts, they were, though in another guise, perpetuating the duality between revelation and history. Beginning strictly with a concern for the pristine accounts of the Christ-event in the New Testament, they were soon led into two difficulties; on the one hand, in order not to identify revelation with every historical occurrence, they were forced to posit some scheme of the historical and suprahistorical similar to the natural-supranatural or image-idea patterns which they were rejecting; and, on the other hand, their distinctions between the mundanely historical and the suprahistorical led them back into a form of Christology typically idealistic. The essence of Christianity was, according to Albrecht Ritschl, the idea of the Kingdom of God. Harnack concentrated on Jesus' teaching of the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man and the eternal value of the human soul; while Wilhelm Herrmann discovered the centre of Christianity in the "inner life of Jesus". The decisive feature in Christianity, counter to the initial approach of these theologians, does not lie in the historical as such, nor in the purely

historical fact. On the contrary, the Ritschlians, while being concerned to interpret the Gospel in a more historical dress, practice a careful selection of Gospel facts and a reinterpretation of the historical along the same abstract lines which they had opposed in the Hegelians and in the ancient Christologies.

The Ritschlians, unlike the Hegelians and Christ-myth theorists, do not use the word 'myth' in their interpretations of Christianity. One must, on the basis of some of their ideas concerning the nature of the historical and their view of knowledge, describe their approach to the mythological. It would seem that 'myth' was a general term of disrepute employed, though there is no evidence of this, to refer to the Christologies which began their interpretation from some ideas of "God-in-Himself". Any thought of God, the Christ, which did not proceed from the effects of God or his predicates, was illusionary or mythical. It would appear, especially in the slight role given to symbolic thinking by the Ritschlians, that myth or symbols were negatively interpreted. Endeavouring to give the Gospel a certainty and an empirical grounding lacking in the interpretations they

criticised, they failed to see that such myths as the Kingdom of God, the inner life of Jesus, etc., went beyond the realm of the factual-historical. It was the function of the Christ, his ethical work and its value which formed the matrix of the Ritschlian position. But, in considering the universal significance of the function of Christ and his work, they were, seemingly, oblivious of the fact that their positions moved from the strictly ethical over into the cosmic. Their prophetic, functional type Christology was impregnated with the sacramental significance of the Christ, though in a different guise. In their historicising of Jesus, they were forced to make some theological statements about God and the 'nature' of the Christ. And, these statements were necessarily of an interpretative quality not unlike the general statements about God and Christ that they opposed in the Hegelians.

While we may examine the Ritschlian theology and find traces of mythology or interpretations of biblical mythology, the fact remains that the term 'myth' does not enter into their theology. Endeavouring to place religion and theology on an ascertainable, even empirical basis, they eschewed

anything, especially myth, which might detract from the type of religious certainty they advocated. It would appear that mythology, speculative theology, Hegelian metaphysics and the Christology of the ancients were declared nebulous, even fallacious, ways of speaking of God and His activity.

In the third section of the thesis, "Some Twentieth-century efforts to resolve theological problems" were examined. In this section, we were anxious to discover the positive role of the two concepts 'myth' and 'history'. In William Temple's theology, chosen because it formed a bridge over which many of the Nineteenth century ideas passed into the Twentieth century, we discovered a readiness to give the Hegelian and Ritschlian Christologies a hearing. True to his sacramental heritage in Anglicanism, Temple was obligated, even if he could not approve of much in the Patristic and Hegelian interpretations of the Christ, to relate the Christ to creation and to treat the uniqueness and finality of the Christ which presupposed a high doctrine of the Trinity. Influenced by the Ritschlian emphasis on the prophetic, ethical Jesus, it was necessary for Temple to assign a place of importance to the work

of the Christ. However effectively Temple's "sacramental universe" idea may be for understanding the presence of God in Christ in the world, and however questionable his evolutionary emergent hypothesis may be, we were convinced that he left the Hegelian and Ritschlian emphases in a side-by-side relationship in his theology. The idea of the Christ and the fact of Jesus were both integral, both necessary, but, so it appeared to us from a survey of his dependence upon the evolutionary hypothesis, including the incarnation as the pinnacle of this process, the paradox of the God-man was absent in his theology.

In our survey of the theology of Rudolf Bultmann, we compared and contrasted his demythologisation of the New Testament with D.F. Strauss' work in the Nineteenth century. After this introductory treatment of Bultmann's ideas, his description of myth and his handling of mythical materials was examined with particular attention being given to the criteria used for interpreting myth in the New Testament. In this context, we were interested in the distinction which Bultmann makes between the two adjectives mythical and mythological. And, finally, for the sake of correcting Bultmann's one-sided view

of myth, we glanced at the place Tillich accords myth and symbols, especially the way in which symbols have the possibility of saying something about God.

Strauss' demythologization, apart from his dependence on Hegelianism for a solution to the doubts which his radical biblical criticisms had raised, was a precursor of Bultmann's scheme. Having had much of the mythical materials outlined for him, and even the distinctions between the mythi in the New Testament, it was not necessary for Bultmann to prove the presence of myth in the New Testament. Bultmann's work in the origin of myth merely extended Strauss' exclusive concern for Old Testament prototypes. He was intent on showing the broader basis for the mythical forms in the New Testament, particularly the presence of myths arising in inter-testament Judaism, Gnosticism and in the mystery religions.

However, the broader basis for the mythical materials in the New Testament was not the only advance Bultmann made over the Straussian scheme. Unlike Strauss, who was intent on eliminating the mythical portions and retaining the historical, Bultmann is attempting to interpret the mythical and

to give the Kerygma, which is presented in the New Testament in a mythical framework, a positive interpretation.

But, to interpret the Kerygma, which is event and confession, act and response, address and obedience, a norm had to be introduced. This norm or interpretative tool was the real purpose or intention of the Kerygma; which was, according to Bultmann, the self-understanding which man has when he is addressed by the message. The mythical in the New Testament was not, as Bultmann initially contended, "stories of the gods", or fanciful tales relating how God became man and, through becoming man, had made possible redemption from evil forces. On the contrary, the mythical is a way of speaking of the other worldly in terms of this world - the manner of speaking of God in analogies taken from man's involvement in history.

While agreeing that Bultmann's existentialist interpretation of myth had much to commend it, and that interest in and concern with the situation of revelation was a necessary corrective to the static, mechanical view of revelation, viz., as revelatum, we wanted to quarrel with the limited role he gives to myth and symbols. These concepts, according to Tillich, have the possibility of saying something

about God as well as about the situation which produced the symbols. Tillich's theology, while agreeing with Bultmann's emphasis on the receptive side of revelation and the self-understanding which comes through being addressed by the Word, is concerned with speaking about the Word which addresses man and which makes possible man's response.

Two final observations may be made in connection with the use of the concepts 'myth' and 'history' in the theologians discussed in the three sections of the thesis. With the exception of Bultmann and Tillich, theologians use the concepts without clarifying the numerous ways in which they have been used and understood in the history of Christian thought. Strauss and J.M. Robertson have a reference point in their separate philosophies and each writer utilises the concepts 'myth' and 'history' in ways which will justify their chosen philosophy, e.g., idealism and naturalism. In point of fact, every theologian, including Bultmann and Tillich, has his particular understanding of the ideas signified in the two concepts, and the terms are indicative of the theologian's total approach to theological issues. Moreover, an analysis of other facets in the separate points of view is necessary before one is equipped to grasp the weight which is given to the two concepts.

In the second instance, though related to the first observation, a survey of the development of the concepts 'myth' and 'history' brings us face to face with many of the issues which are implied in the use of these concepts, e.g., Christology and, in particular, the ways in which one might speak of the activity of God in His world. One cannot rest, as so many are content to do, with a mere description of the concepts in the various theologians. An initial description of the terms opens the door for many other explorations. The theological and philosophical perspective of the scholars is the most important concern. Only when this perspective is clarified can one begin to understand, on the one hand, the ambiguity of the concepts, and, on the other, the necessity for their use in theological discussion. "The development of the concepts 'myth' and 'history' from Hegel to Bultmann" could be aptly subtitled "The language of Christology from Hegel to Bultmann".

APPENDIX A.

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