

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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Title of Thesis "The Concept of Divine Immanence in the Theology
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The dominant immanent character of nineteenth century theology was directly related to the epistemological problem in modern thought, which had reached a climax with Kant's bifurcation of knowledge into noumenal and phenomenal elements and his consequent restriction of metaphysics. The developmental philosophy of history, advanced by Lessing and Herder, and the Romanticist individuality and wholeness of outlook, were further contributory influences upon the pattern of the theology of the period.

Schleiermacher's theology of experience embodied the Romanticist outlook in making a state of feeling, orientated upon the universe, normative for religious truth. Having rejected metaphysics, he confined all determinate knowledge of God and of His relation to the world, to a description of states of religious consciousness.

In German idealist philosophy, Romanticism found a variant expression as an organon of reflective awareness. Hegel made God the final term of a system of rational harmony in which the Idea triumphs over all antitheses of experiential reality. His system could be characterized as a 'panentheism', in which God is not simply identified with the world, but is made the Absolute, under which the world is organically subsumed.

Baur used the Hegelian dialectic to remove the transcendent uniqueness of Christian history, regarding the latter as the necessary evolution of the Absolute. In Strauss, the same pattern of thought, coupled with a radical Biblical criticism, reduced Gospel history to universal religious truth, immanent to the religious consciousness. Biedermann did not effectively fulfil his aim of uniting the philosophy of the Absolute with an independent, objective world of reality.

In British theology, Coleridge introduced an idealist impulse, in terms of which an idea, or spiritual truth, was conceived to be more important than Biblical history or the historic dogma. Toward the end of the century, neo-Hegelianism developed a more absolute idealist system which made God the end term of a process of development, a view which accorded well with contemporary, optimistic and evolutionary thought.

The historical positivism of Ritschl eliminated metaphysical or transcendental knowledge of God. Doctrinal knowledge concerning God was made subject to the judgment of its worth for the individual. His method promoted an approach to the study of religious history whereby universal religious values were gleaned from the various historical manifestations of religion. In the thought of Troeltsch, God is little more than a principle of purposive development within the flow of historical process.

The present reaction to nineteenth century immanentism was prefigured within that century itself, in Kierkegaard's rejection of a theory of knowledge and his insistence upon the absolute disjunction between the human and the Divine, a chasm which can be bridged only by the paradoxical action of Divine grace and the leap of human faith. Martin Kähler challenged syncretic historicism, in the centrality which he accorded to Christology and in his belief that Biblical history is qualified by suprahistorical factors distinguishing it from general history.

In these protests we have the essential elements of contemporary revived transcendentalism, and Biblically-centred theology. We may properly conclude that, in Biblical faith, a view of God's sovereign holiness is found united with a belief in the immediacy of His presence in revelation and providential action.

Use other side if necessary.

D I V I N E I M M A N E N C E

THE CONCEPT OF DIVINE IMMANENCE
IN THE
THEOLOGY OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of Divinity
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Doctor of Philosophy
by
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TO MY MOTHER

P R E F A C E

The present work shares in the limitations of any specialized approach to the study of a period in theology. It cannot presume to keep clearly in view, and to balance carefully, the many facets of thought which characterize an era. I believe, however, that the theme of this work provides a fundamental approach to the study of theology, and particularly to the theology of the past century. The doctrines of God, creation, providence, man, revelation, Christology, are all crucially related to the concept of immanence.

In order to guard against superficiality, investigation has been limited to a few representative positions. Large areas of theological reflection have been left untouched, e.g., the Vermittlungstheologie and the Oxford Movement. It has been assumed that the 'theology of immanence' in the nineteenth century represents the source from which the leading theological discussion of today has been influenced, either positively or negatively.

The method followed in this work has been to allow exposition to speak for itself, with a minimum of criticism. For the greater part, the principal works of the German theologians have been read in the original text, and, often at the expense of an inconvenient style, citations have been drawn from the text which was actually used in the course of research.

I wish to record sincere thanks to my Faculty supervisors, the Very Rev. Principal John Baillie and the Rev. A.M. Fairweather, for their courtesy in directing my course of study; also to Professor Karl Barth of Basel for according me a personal discussion of his views upon the subject of this thesis. I wish further to express my gratitude to the Scholarships Committee of the University of Edinburgh for material assistance, and the Senatus for granting a leave-of-absence, which permitted me to undertake a period of profitable research at the University of Basel.

Montreal,
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W.J.S.F.

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CHAPTER I.

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

In the course of this work it will be shown that the concept of Divine immanence played a deeply significant role in the development of nineteenth century theology. The concept, however, was not clearly defined and discussed under chapter and heading by each of the representative theologians and religious philosophers whom we shall consider in the following pages. It was, rather, an underlying motif which broadly influenced the theological thinking of the period.

No preliminary definition of the concept of Divine immanence therefore can serve to guide our study throughout. Instead, we must endeavour to learn how the various thinkers under consideration formulated the problem of the relations of God to the world, of the Divine to the human; and only in conclusion may we seek to make an independent evaluation of the problem as it applies to the entire period.

In order to orientate our study, a cursory review of the history of the problem of immanence in modern thought is indicated. It was the rise of the epistemological controversy in the realm of philosophical and scientific thought which precipitated the widespread attempt on the part of

nineteenth century theologians to bridge the gap between the human and the Divine. It was deemed necessary to work out a modus vivendi between philosophy and theology in which a common theory of knowledge would apply to both studies. From the period of the rise of modern philosophy, when philosophy came to be a separate enquiry from theology, no serious attempt had been made to effect a reconciliation between the two, until the Enlightenment. It was not until the nineteenth century, however, that the dominant movements in theology began to grapple directly with the problems posed by modern thought.

For the theme of our study, it is highly relevant to mention, at the outset, the Italian Renaissance philosopher, Giordano Bruno. It was Bruno who first disturbed the view of the transcendence of God held by Catholic orthodoxy, wherein God was conceived to exist outside the periphery of the universe, in terms of a spatial metaphor. Bruno not only accepted the new Copernican revolution concerning the organization of the physical universe, but he regarded the universe as being infinite in extension as well, and left no 'place' for the divine habitation. He revived the Stoic pantheistic conception of God. God is the Whole, impregnating every part of reality. He constitutes the inner harmony which unites all things. In this view of Bruno, there was no absolute relation of 'over' and 'under' which the old world-view had taken for granted.

Henceforward, simplicity of conception was no longer possible in describing the relation of God to the world.

It was the philosophical method and system of Descartes (1596-1650), however, which provided the creative impulse to modern thought. His subjective rationalism and idealist tendencies held a dominant position in philosophy down to the German idealism of the nineteenth century. Descartes held that truth consists of clear and distinct ideas. The most distinct of all ideas, the idea of myself as a thinking thing, is the proof of my own existence. The 'idea', then, is to be equated with existence.

This root assumption was the basis for his revival of the Anselmian ontological argument for the existence of God. The idea which man has of Deity, together with the idea of His perfection, is sufficient ground for positing the existence of such a Deity. He says,

Since whatever in the end be the cause of my existence, it must of necessity be admitted that it is likewise a thinking being, and that it possesses in itself the idea and all the perfections I attribute to deity. ¹

Man possesses in himself the perception of the infinite, and of a being more perfect than himself; otherwise, how could he be conscious of himself as a deficient being who has doubts and desires? ² The idea of God is therefore innate. This

1. Descartes, Meditations. p. 50. - = III. Descartes h. 108

2. Ibid, p. 46. = III " 105

authority of thought so to posit the existence of God implies that for Descartes God is immanent within the thought which affirms His existence.

In the Cartesian philosophy God is the only substance which exists in and for itself. The created world is continually dependent upon God. "The action by which he now sustains it is the same with that by which he originally created it."¹ Thought and Extension, mind and body, are mutually exclusive and can be brought together only by an arbitrary intervention of God. Matter is in itself dead and moves mechanically, according to the original laws of motion given to it by God. Mind knows the external world by means of Divinely given intuitions. A knowledge of God is therefore necessary and prior to scientific knowledge of the world.² God is the one substance behind all, who reconciles the duality of created substance by His 'occasional' interventions. This occasionalist doctrine of the Divine action in the world was taken up and pushed to an extreme by Malebranche, who made God the immediate cause of every isolated change which takes place in the universe.

It was Spinoza, the central thinker of the seventeenth century, who took the further step to pantheism by making God

1. Descartes, Discourse on Method, p. 87
 2. Meditations, p.70

not only sole cause of all that happens but sole substance as well. Thought and extension are not created substances, as in the thought of Descartes. They are attributes of the one substance, God, Who exists in and for Himself. God is infinite substance, and His attributes are expressed in an infinite number of modes or particulars which appear in the physical universe. He is co-extensive with nature. "God is the immanent and not the transitive cause of all things." ¹ There is no place for chance events or for the arbitrary action of God:

In nature there is nothing contingent, but all things are determined from the necessity of the divine nature to exist and act in a certain manner. ²

This necessity is a demonstrable mathematical necessity which rules out the possibility of human freedom:

We do everything by the will of God alone, and....we are partakers of the divine nature in proportion as our actions become more and more perfect and we more and more understand God. ³

All of our ideas necessarily involve the eternal and infinite essence of God; and only as our ideas are related to Him are they true.

This strongly idealistic tendency in Spinoza fails, however, to completely resolve the Cartesian dualism. Mind for Spinoza is not reducible to matter. Matter, on the other

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1. Spinoza, Ethics. p. 22
 2. Ibid, p. 29
 3. Ibid, p. 102

hand, is still the substantial in material phenomena, which persists through all change and can neither arise nor cease to be. ¹ Mind and matter are therefore parallel attributes existing side by side and are reconciled only by the fact that they inhere within the one infinite substance, God. The differentia which he admits within his one substance virtually re-establish the Cartesian dualism. God is defined as nature in its active aspect, the natura naturans; and He is not to be simply equated with the totality of phenomena. On the other hand, the modes of particular phenomena, into which substance differentiates are nature in its passive aspect, the natura naturata. In spite of the fact that there is no 'substantial' separation between God as active, and God in His passive attributes, Spinoza has here introduced a distinction of 'worth' within nature. ² Likewise his ethics presuppose a dualism of value, if not an ontological dualism. He believes that man must rise above all 'finite' passions by means of a knowledge of mathematical necessity, by an intellectual love of God.

Spinoza has not really shown how the modes of God arise and how they are related, in any organic sense as Hegel

1. Höffding, A History of Modern Philosophy, I, p. 312

2. op.cit. I, p. 314 "With Spinoza, the concepts, Substance, God, and Nature are coextensive, yet in the term 'God' he introduces an estimation of worth....logically.... instead of having several fundamental concepts in his system, he ought to have had only one, i.e., substance."

was to attempt later. He has not shown a basis for value distinctions within the one substance. His unitary substance, which subsumes all attributes, remains abstract, and a 'practical' dualism still exists.

Leibnitz, the German Enlightenment thinker, endeavoured to resolve the problem of dualism, not by a monism, but by an infinite plurality of substances, in each of which all oppositions are reconciled. The indivisible substances, or monads, each have an original property of acting conferred upon them by God Who created them and maintains them in being. Together, the monads constitute the 'republic' of the universe. There is unity and agreement in the whole because there is perfection in the units. Each monad reflects the perfections of the entire universe, although in varying degrees of distinctness and from varying points of view. Rational soul or spirit, however, contains something more than the other monads. It is also an "image of the Divinity." ¹

Leibnitz insisted upon the intelligibility and continuity of all existence. This was his contribution to the development of German idealism. ² Monads move and relate to

1. Leibnitz, Philosophical Works, ed. by Duncan. p.215
 2. Hirsch, Geschichte der neuern protestantische Theologie, II, p.9 "Leibniz ist der Begründer der deutschen idealistischen Weltansicht, welche im Unterschied vom antiken Idealismus die mechanistisch-kausale Naturerklärung als ein Moment der Wahrheit in sich befasst."

one another, not by external influence or by action upon one another, but by a pre-established harmony bestowed upon them by God at the creation of the world. Their action is immanent. In this best possible of worlds they work together teleologically toward the realization of the City of God. This is Leibnitz' answer to the mechanism and occasionalism of Descartes and Malebranche. He does not, however, remove the 'distinction' between soul and matter; they exist together as parallels, but always pre-determined in their reciprocal action. ¹

He has avoided an ontological dualism within the world of existence by removing God from providential participation in the world's affairs. God is separate from the world, as original primitive substance, as the Creator of the world and its harmonious working:

God alone is substance really separated from matter, since he is actus purus, endowed with no passive power, which, wherever it is, constitutes matter. ²

Leibnitz does not rule out the possibility that God may give a new direction to nature, but this He does by supernatural power rather than through immanent means. Leibnitz leaves room for Divine revelation when he says that

In good philosophy, and sound theology, we ought to distinguish between what is explicable by the natures and powers of creatures, and what is explicable only by the powers of the infinite substance." ³

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1. Leibnitz, op. cit. p. 142
 2. Ibid., p. 192
 3. Ibid., p. 283

The practical import of his system, none the less, was to leave God out of the world in its present existence, and to confer upon thought an independent rational harmony in terms of the mind's innate ideas.

The pre-established harmony of Leibnitz and the rationalist emphasis of his system had a counterpart in English Deism during the first generation of the eighteenth century. Eminent among the Deists were Toland, Collins, Tindal and Chubb. They were directly influenced by Herbert of Cherbury, who, a century earlier, had developed a general science of natural religion, and also by John Locke, the English Enlightenment thinker, who had sought to prove 'the reasonableness of Christianity'. The Deists endeavoured to show that nature, from its creation by God, was endowed with immanent laws whereby it continues to exist. The mind of man has an endowment of natural reason which is adequate to his needs. There is consequently no need for a Divine interposition into the operations of nature in the form of miracle, nor for a divinely-bestowed revelation to man. Reason provides us with a perfect natural revelation, to which no external revelation can add or take away. "Reason is the only foundation of all certitude."¹

Locke had said, with the scholastics, that the Christian revelation is above reason but is not contrary to it.

1. Toland, Christianity Not Mysterious. p. 6

Toland went further and affirmed that there is nothing above reason in Christianity. The so-called Christian 'revelation' is not required by rational people but is merely an aid to assist ordinary mortals. If what God said to man did not agree with their common notions, then He would have no point of contact in speaking to them. ¹

Tindal regarded natural and revealed religion as but the internal and the external revelation, respectively, of the one identical unchangeable will of God. The Christian religion, or 'the republication of the religion of nature', has been in existence since the creation, at which time God gave mankind the means to know it. We are not guided in life by any contingent providential direction:

'Tis impossible to have Rules laid down by any external Revelation for every particular case; and therefore, there must be some standing rule, discoverable by the Light of Nature, to direct us in all such cases." ²

All of God's laws are "built on the eternal Reason of things." ³
 The Deists were not seeking to interpret nature apart from the God who created it, but rather, they removed contingency and novelty from His action in order that nature might be pliant to the eternal laws of reason. They had no concept of development.

1. Ibid, p. 128

2. Tindal, Christianity as Old as the Creation. p. 16

3. Ibid, p. 110

The confidence of German Rationalism and English Deism in the Divine sanction of the human reason was dealt a severe blow by the sceptical issue of the empirical philosophy in the thought of David Hume. Locke, the founder of the empirical tradition, had repudiated innate ideas, and the possibility of a substance-philosophy. He made substance the unknowable substrate of the impressions mediated by our senses. Sense impressions are the source of our ideas. Berkeley had denied the reality of substance altogether, and with it, inert matter. Nature is composed solely of perceptions and spirits who perceive. The regularity of nature is guaranteed by God, the author of the perceived ideas. Berkeley treated the material world as

a system of signs, which have no existence save as intermittent experience in the minds of individual knowers and as a continuous¹ divine purpose of acting according to certain rules.

It was his religious and idealistic presuppositions which preserved Berkeley himself from scepticism.

Hume, however, did away with substance, causation, and the identity of the self; all were for him ideal abstractions. Consciousness is left with only sense experience

1. Pringle-Pattison, The Idea of God. p. 183

and the habitual associations of the ideas delivered by the senses. The idea of causation is merely that habit of mind whereby we associate together certain observed constancies in the relation between events and their antecedents. There is no possible experience which could give rise to a conception of God as cause of the existence of the world.

The fact that there is evidence of cause and of design in the series of events which make up our world of experience is no reason for lumping the series together into a whole and insisting that it requires an intelligent cause.¹ Man has no divinely-sanctioned faculty of reason which can be legislative for the nature of existence. We have only isolated ideas which are too confused and elusive to be reckoned as having a place in a supreme intelligence. He denies the ability of the human consciousness to make speculations into the nature of God. He says conclusively,

Our ideas reach no farther than our experience: we have no experience of divine attributes and operations: I need not conclude my syllogism.²

All the traditional enquiries concerning God, His nature and activity, fall away under the sceptical conclusions of Hume.

Immanuel Kant was profoundly dissatisfied with the development of the epistemological problem in both rationalism

1. Hume, Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, p. 40. "From observing the growth of a hair, can we learn anything concerning the generation of a man?"

2. Ibid, p. 30

and empiricism. In both traditions the cleft between subject and object in the process of knowledge had resulted in untenable conclusions. The Leibnitz-Wolffian rationalism had resorted to a pre-established harmony to assure to the mind the certainty of the objects which reason takes within its province. In empirical thought, Hume's scepticism had not only rendered metaphysics impossible but had denied to the knower all real knowledge. Kant inverted the traditional interest of philosophy in determining the proper 'objects' of thought, to undertake a thoroughgoing critique of the conditions underlying the possibility of thought itself. His avowed intention, at the outset of the first Critique, was to discover if metaphysical knowledge (synthetic judgments a priori) is possible.

With his deduction, a priori, of the subjective forms of sensation and the categories of the understanding, he attempted to show that the mind is not passive in experience. Indeed it is possible to form valid a priori concepts which will be applicable to experience, as mathematical science witnesses. It must be remembered, however, that the validity of a priori or analytical knowledge depends upon the fact that it is amenable to a possible intuitive sense experience. "Knowledge arises independently of particular experience but is valid only

for experience. ¹ Subject and object are irrevocably bound together in the process of knowledge. The 'I think' must accompany every judgment about experience.

Sense experience, therefore, as received through the forms of sensation and interpreted through the concepts of the understanding, yields real knowledge; but it is a knowledge only of phenomena. There remain the noumena, or things-in-themselves, which underly sense experience, but can never be received in a sense experience. The sphere of the noumena or transcendent objects, includes the major concepts with which traditional metaphysics has been concerned: the soul, God, and freedom. On these issues Kant remains, theoretically in the same scepticism as Hume:

The outcome of the Critical enquiry is to establish the legitimacy of immanent metaphysics, and the impossibility of all transcendent speculation."²

To be distinguished from 'transcendent' is Kant's use of the term 'transcendental'. When the latter adjective is used with reference to experience, it refers to no transcendent element which is constitutively present in the knowing process, but it describes only the bare formal 'conditions' which make experience and knowledge possible.

1. K. Smith, A Commentary to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason. p. 14.

2. Ibid, p. 26,7.

A further use of the term applies to the Ideas of Reason, or pure objects of the understanding, which have a 'regulative' value for the understanding.

Kant rejects the teleological, cosmological, and ontological arguments for the existence of God. The teleological and cosmological arguments, when applied to the world as a whole, are too large for our concepts, which must be valid for a possible experience. They therefore fall within the same category as the ontological argument. In each of the three arguments an idea, lying outside of experience, is assumed to represent existence. Kant dismissed the ontological argument with his celebrated illustration of the one hundred thalers: the thought of having one hundred thalers in my pocket is quite different from having them there in reality.

Reason, none the less, aspires beyond experiential concepts to pure or transcendental Ideas, which it finds to be of regulative value in the organization of experience as a whole. The employment of pure reason has for its object the transcendental physiology of nature (i.e., nature taken as a whole and beyond a possible experience), and the relation of nature as a whole to a being above nature.¹ The transcendental Idea of God is the highest ideal of reason and is required to bring cohesion to the entire series of experience. If the Ideas

1. Kant, Critique of Pure Reason. p. 662

of pure reason are permitted to become constitutive, however, they represent transcendent objects which cannot possibly enter into experience, and so involve the understanding in hopeless antinomies. For every transcendental concept there are opposing experiential concepts which present themselves to the understanding to negate the former. We must not, therefore, ascribe existence, or reality, to the transcendental concepts.

Kant's careful distinction between phenomena and noumena and between real knowledge and transcendental Ideas, distinguishes his thought from subsequent idealism. He did not share with the idealist the assumption that knowledge of the self is more certain and more honourable than knowledge of nature. It is true that he believed the continuity of experience requires the postulation of an 'original unity of apperception'; but it remains a transcendental postulate and not an immediate subjective intuition. The self-consciousness is not completely analysable for Kant. Idealism did, however, receive a tremendous stimulus from Kant, in view of the organic role which he ascribed to the subjective consciousness in the process of knowledge. In Kant's thought,

Nature consists for us of nothing but appearance,
existing only in the mode in which they are experienced,

and therefore as necessarily conforming to the conditions under which experience is alone possible. ¹

The step from this position to that of idealism was easily taken by certain of Kant's disciples.

If the theoretical approach had removed the transcendent objects of speculative and religious interest, Kant restored this kingdom in his practical philosophy. He gave to the latter an independent validity apart from theoretical philosophy. Out of the practical interests of ethics he 'removed reason to make room for faith.' Arguing from the immanent moral sense, he reinstates belief in the existence of God, freedom, and immortality, the three postulates which he believes are necessary to assure the possibility of moral action and its fulfilment in the summum bonum. (The concept of God, reached in this manner, may, of course, be subjected to the safeguards of a theoretical criticism). ² Because the belief in the existence of God has been derived through the moral faculty rather than through the theoretical understanding, the belief cannot be theoretically affirmed, but must be expressed in the form of a personal moral conviction. ³ This dependence of belief in God upon a moral

1. K. Smith, op. cit., p. 259

2. Kant, op. cit., p. 530

3. Ibid, p. 650. "My conviction is not logical, but moral certainty; and since it rests on subjective grounds (of the moral sentiment), I must not even say, 'It is morally certain that there is a God, etc.' but 'I am morally certain, etc.'."

basis virtually makes the moral order itself the ultimate reality for Kant. ¹

Kant defines religion as "the recognition of all duties as divine commands." ² The divine commands, however, do not come to man ab extra. The reason co-operates with the moral consciousness in determining the unconditional laws for conduct:

Only through reason can thought add revelation to the concept of a religion, since this very concept, as though deduced from an obligation to the will of a moral legislator, is a pure concept of reason. ³

A revealed faith and statutory laws preceding the experience of religion would make religion a pseudo-service. The sole function of revelation is to make more comprehensible the commanding role which reason plays in a natural religion. The thought of a Divine incarnation is treated only in a problematical, hypothetical way. "The archetype of such a person is to be sought nowhere but in our own reason." ⁴

The ability of the reason to prescribe the divine commands does not amount to a constitutive indwelling of the Divine within man. ⁵ Kant does not wholly deny the idea of a

1. Oman, The Natural and the Supernatural, p. 28.
 2. Kant, Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone, p. 142.
 3. Ibid, p. 144.
 4. Ibid, p. 57.
 5. Ibid, (intr.) p. lxvii. "(Kant) had always looked upon the idea of divine immanence with profound distrust..... (Continued on page 19).

'supernatural accession' to aid our deficient moral capacity but he believes that such an accession is a transcendent concept and very hazardous. It is difficult to reconcile with moral responsibility:

That which is to be accredited to us as morally good conduct must take place not through foreign influence but solely through the best possible use of our own powers. ¹

To the end, Kant maintained immanent rational safeguards to rule out the acceptance of transcendent objects of knowledge.

Kant's philosophy aroused not only a positive reaction in the idealists, but also a strong negative reaction. The latter come chiefly from the Romanticists who insisted upon the immediacy and intuitiveness of knowledge. One significant figure who stood very much alone in his reaction against Kant was J. G. Hamann.

Hamann would go so far with the Romanticists as to say that reason must not be opposed to the senses and that nature must be regarded as one whole. Nature, however, can not yield an adequate account of God. Hamann made a sharp separation between nature and grace. True and adequate knowledge must come

(5. cont'd) He was so anxious to maintain that the moral law is man's own law that he could not seriously entertain the idea of its being, in its very essence the voice of God." Cf. Pringle Pattison, op. cit., p. 37, "The immanence of God was an idea foreign to Kant's whole way of thinking."

1. Ibid, p. 179.

to us through revelation. We find God when we find ourselves in God. Because truth is wholly subjective, it cannot be taught or demonstrated to the reason but must be individually perceived by faith as it is mediated to us in Scripture. The verification of the words of Scripture lies in the fact that in its light we are able for the first time to discern the acts of God in nature and in history. Hamann's position was one of epistemological scepticism. His thought represented the first great attempt to make use of scepticism as a companion to faith, in opposition to the growing critical tendencies of philosophy.¹ It was an attempt that was to be taken up later by Kierkegaard.

While Kant's epistemology and ethics signaled the high point of the Enlightenment, a contemporary movement played a no less significant role in contributing to the intellectual atmosphere in which nineteenth century theology became acclimatized. It was the rise of a developmental philosophy of history. The modern view of history owes much to the name of Lessing, a slightly younger contemporary of Kant.

Lessing's characteristic theme was that "That which Education is to the Individual, Revelation is to the Race."² Revelation is a historical process of human development. History is not a mere register of events, but a dynamic movement

1. Hirsch, op. cit., IV, p. 180.

2. Lessing, The Education of the Human Race. p. 1.

in which human fortunes are moulded. The goal of the process is the perfection of mankind. Man must rise out of the restrictions and habits of tradition to attain to an ideal Humanität. There should be a progress in man's spiritual capacities commensurate with the development in science. Lessing's religion is a faith in the evolutionary trend of the immanent forces of fate toward the realization of his ideal for man.¹

He traces progressive development in the Jewish-Christian tradition. The Old Testament served as a primer for faith at an early stage of Israel's development. Eventually, the Old Testament conceptions of reward and punishment were no longer needed as guides to moral conduct. With the coming of Christ, mankind was given a second primer: although the era of Christ is not to be considered as the last stage of religious instruction. This religious process in the history of a people possesses no revelatory values which the human reason could not attain by itself, but a knowledge of this objective religious history may speed up and universalize the realization of religious and ethical truths. Revelation, understood in this sense, is never ceasing. Lessing himself, if given the choice

1. Hirsch, op. cit. IV, p. 131. "Glaube an den ewigen über die Erde hinausweisenden Sinn des Geschehens als eines Vervollkommungsprozesses. Das ist Lessings Religion, und das ist sie ganz....Seine Vorsehung ist eigentlich eine unerbittlich alles in allem wirkende Schicksalsgewalt."

between possessing pure truth and the search after it, would choose the search. ¹ Religion should never permit itself to become congealed within a set tradition. Religion existed prior to the Bible and does not receive its authentication from the latter. ²

The historical developmental method which reached a climax in the religionsgeschichtliche school in the nineteenth century, received a further advance in the writings of Herder. ³ He belonged more strictly to the theological world than Lessing, whose chief fame was literary. Herder's Ideen paved the way for later philosophies of history. Like Lessing he believed that the search for truth is more delightful than the possession of it. It was his fundamental thesis that "Mankind is forever changing, always manifesting itself differently, gaining fresh strength and losing it as well." ⁴ Throughout this continuum of history he saw the action of an omnipotent and omniscient Providence. ⁵ He sought to discover a religio-historical and

1. Lessing, Theologische Streitschriften, p. 19.

2. Ibid, p. 121. "Die Religion ist nicht wahr, weil die Evangelisten und Apostel sie lehrten; sondern sie lehrten sie, weil sie wahr ist." *Die protestantische Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert*,

3. Barth, Die Geschichte der protestantische Theologie, p. 282. "Ohne Herder keine Erlanger und keine religionsgeschichtliche Schule. Ohne Herder auch kein Troeltsch."

4. Gillies, Herder, p. 64.

5. Hirsch, op. cit., p. 227. "Zwei stichworte wird er nicht müde zu wiederholen: Offenbarung ist göttliche Erziehung der Menschheit, und: Offenbarung geschieht durch Geschichte."

religio-psychological meaning in past history. For the future, he held Lessing's Humanitäts ideal. In the interests of fulfilling this ideal, man needs an enrichment of taste, perception, and the sense of beauty. The highest blossoming of the human soul takes place in religious experience. In his ideal for humanity we can trace Herder's strong romanticist impulse.

His view of nature was essentially pantheistic. The world is the living garment or symbol of God, and creation is the internal self-impartation of God. Nature and reason are gifts of God along with grace and revelation and it is false to make an artificial distinction between these two types of our endowment. He asks, "Kann der Eine Geber wohl in seinen besten Geschenken gegen sich selbst streiten?"¹ He speaks of the Bible as a 'human' book. God is represented as being contemporaneous to man and cooperative with him through a most intimate involvement in every sphere of human life:

Gott muss den Menschen als gegenwärtig, als mitwirkend in ihr Leben, auch in die kleinsten Umstände desselben mit seinen Absichten verflochten, dargestellt werden; sonst bleiben die schönsten Lehren von Allgemein her, entfernt, todt und öde.²

God is that deeper creative unity subsuming both nature and

1. Herder, Briefe, das Studium der Theologie betreffend, p. 14.

2. Ibid, p.89.

mind, of Whom we can become aware only in feeling.

Herder's romanticism, directly influenced Goethe in his youth, and the latter became the most outstanding literary representative of the romanticist movement. Goethe moved beyond what he considered to be the narrow confines of confessional Christianity, but his thought exercised a widespread influence upon theology. Goethe's conception of nature was essentially the Spinozistic pantheism, with the distinction that, for Goethe, the actualizing of the Divine in nature possesses a developmental history.¹ He had a dynamic rather than a mechanistic conception of world development. The World-Spirit is continually unfolding itself in an infinite variety of life and being.

Goethe united the ideal and the real, art and nature. It is in the cultured artistic society that the world is finally harmonized, and nature and art become merely two different expressions of the one creative power at work in the world.² With this harmonious view of nature, his concept of knowledge is one in which the careful Kantian analysis of the knowing process is lightly by-passed. Nature makes a 'total' impression

1. Siebeck, Goethe als Denker, p. 78. "Das Wesentliche in der Natur ist für Goethe im unterschied von Spinoza, dass sie eine Entwicklungsgeschichte besitzt."

2. Ibid, p. 85. "Natur und kunst sind für ihn im Gründe nur verschiedene Aeusserungen der einen und selben durch die Welt waltenden Schöpferkraft."

upon us. The character of any object of knowledge is the impression which it makes upon a 'living' man, particularly on the side of feeling. The goal of all practical and theoretical wisdom is to enhance the worth of human life.

Within a more definitely Christian and theological context, Romanticism found expression in the writings of Novalis and Fr. Schlegel. The blend of poetic and philosophical world-view which characterized the thought of both writers receives a more orderly treatment in the writing of Schlegel. The mature life of the latter fell within the nineteenth century, but probably his greatest significance for theology lay in the influence which he exerted upon the young Schleiermacher before the turn of the century. Schlegel was one of the most prominent leaders of the Romanticist School in Berlin of which Schleiermacher became a member.

Schlegel designated his philosophy a 'philosophy of life', which he wished to distinguish from a system of thought concerned with isolated objects of nature or abstract theoretical problems. He opposed his position to that of both materialism and idealism:

Every species of infidelity is either a material deification of nature and a worship of the sensible powers of life, or it is an abstract deification of the absolute subjective me." 1

1. Schlegel, The Philosophy of Life, p. 215.

He sought to map out a middle course which he designated 'spiritualism'. The philosophy of life,

Setting out from the soul as the beginning and first subject of its speculations, contemplates the mind or spirit as its highest and supreme object. ¹

Although Schlegel made consciousness the starting point and object of thought, he endeavoured to avoid ending up with a rational absolute, by affirming a personalistic polarity within the field of conscious life. God is present to the mind as "a living spirit, a personal God." ²

Nature is not self-subsistent but exists in God. It is to be regarded as created; otherwise, eternal matter would be virtually a second 'finite' God. "The sensible world may be looked upon as a veil thrown over the spiritual world." ³ It is a false conception which separates the finite from the infinite, bespeaking only a confused mind, which must be restored to its true unity. Faith is the middle link between science and religion; the two are one in God. "The pure and living faith of a loving soul abiding permanently in God, is properly the centre of the human consciousness." ⁴ This harmony achieved by faith is not an all-absorption of consciousness into the Divine; pantheism is a false extreme to be avoided equally

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1. Ibid, p. 61.
 2. Ibid, p. 61.
 3. Ibid, p. 118.
 4. Ibid, p. 219.

with atheism. He prefers to say that "God.....must form the key-stone in the arch of the whole consciousness." ¹

Schlegel's romanticist conception of the Divine is strikingly manifest when he says that he would rather be confronted with "a Theodicee for the feelings, conceived in the very spirit of love, than any purely rational theory." ²

Because he characterized man's wants and properties as symbolical, he believed that religion must be clothed in symbolical rather than rational formulations. The fanciful and indeterminate character of his romanticist theology reaches a climax when he speaks of "the symbolical significance of life and the symbolical destiny of man in his relation to God." ³

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1. Ibid, p. 256.
 2. Ibid, p. 119.
 3. Ibid, p. 285.

CHAPTER II

THE THEOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

A. Schleiermacher

Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) was the founder of a new era in theology, and with a study of his work we may appropriately enter the field of nineteenth century theology. His writings represented a comprehensive attempt to reinstate Christian theology in the respect of his cultured contemporaries who had repudiated religious faith under the influence of Enlightenment thought. Whether positively or negatively disposed toward Schleiermacher, subsequent theologians have had to take into account the thought of this man who has been described as the greatest German theologian after Luther.

It is important to note some of the elements which made up Schleiermacher's background. His Moravian upbringing and his friendship with the Berlin Romanticist School contributed to his mystical and romanticist tendencies. He had passed through an acquaintance with the Wolffian rationalist tradition, and had rejected the attempt of theologians such as Semler to find a rational basis for Christian doctrines. Spinozism, with which he became familiar through the writings of Jacobi, undoubtedly had an influence on his world-view. The Kantian epistemology

remained at the basis of his thought at all times, in his avoidance of speculative theories beyond the range of experience. With his contemporary, Fichte, whom he regarded as the greatest of speculative philosophers, he shared an individualistic approach to life and the conviction that an intuition of the self is the starting-point of all our knowledge.

Schleiermacher's acceptance of Kant's epistemology did not extend to accepting the latter's bifurcation of the world into the realms of phenomena and noumena. He insisted upon the fundamental identity of knowing and being, of the real and the ideal. The real is simply limited to that which can be experienced; there is no transcendental thing-in-itself. He did not accept Kant's postulates of God, freedom and immortality as the basis of moral experience. Ethics do not require any transcendental postulates as incentives or conditions for right conduct. The goal of ethics is self-development of the individual, to be achieved by moving him to a realization of the potentialities of his own nature. God is an immediate intuition, mediated through world-experience. Freedom is not assured to us from beyond, but it is the realization of our potentialities for moral advance. Immortality is that state of mind which accompanies the consciousness of being at one with the Infinite in the midst of the finite.

Schleiermacher keeps distinct, the functions of knowing, morality, and religion. They are each similarly orientated upon the actual world and human experience, but they pursue their activity along different lines.¹ The religious function is of supreme value to man's life because it represents the fulfilment of an absolute need. The processes of knowing can only become complete through religion, because the latter is a life, an experience, rather than a theory. Morality is affected by religion to this extent, that when we have a knowledge of the Infinite, we do everything with religion, though never from religion. The religious consciousness is an original possession of man, and not something imposed from without by means of a creed. Because it is a consciousness of the Infinite, it cannot be a determinate rational consciousness; its seat is in feeling. The only valid intellectual formulation of dogma must be delivered in the form of a 'description' of the states of religious consciousness.

Schleiermacher desired to make religion a native independent function of the soul, which is amenable to psychological investigation and independent of a philosophical theory. A study of his theology makes it clear, however, that he did not

1. In this view, he reveals himself to be bound by the 'faculty' psychology of his time.

free himself from his basic philosophical presuppositions. A brief survey of some of his leading philosophical conclusions in the Dialektik, concerning knowledge of God and of the world, will serve as a useful basis for an understanding of his religious views, and may indicate to what extent the philosopher dictated to the theologian.

The category of the individual is all-important in the epistemology of the Dialektik, as it is likewise in his religious thought. The individual self-consciousness is the primary locus for the identification of thought and being: "Wir sind denkend, und denken seiend." ¹ With Fichte he makes the analysis of self-consciousness the basis of knowledge. Unlike Fichte he does not discover in this analysis an account of the nature of the Ego in itself, nor does he find the whole universe in the Ego. The analysis yields only the highest attainable ideas. ² Therefore, although the Ego is the starting-point in the knowing process, it is not the end category as well. Complete knowledge lies beyond our grasp, and thus the reality of the non-Ego is constantly assured.

Man, as a thinker, is an individual who belongs within the race, and reason is alike in all men. It is the similarity

1. Schleiermacher, Dialektik. p. 93
2. Hirsch, op. cit. IV, p. 508

of the self-consciousness in all men which makes the communication of ideas possible. While, therefore, it is in self-consciousness that the identification of thought and being takes place, he avoids absolutizing the Ego, both on the grounds of the incompleteness of knowledge and by his recognition of the community of individuals.

Schleiermacher is a realist. The identification of thought and being which occurs in the Ego has an objective basis. The identity of thought and being is the same as the unity of the corporate and the mental. He appears to regard perception and thinking as equivalent and reciprocal. There is an objective correspondence between the world and the human mind: "Die Welt drückt sich aus im Typus des menschlichen Geistes, und dieser Typus stellt sich dar in der Welt." ¹ Every false idea presupposes the true idea corresponding to reality by whose standard the former is deemed false, i.e., unless the false idea represents some fantastic object for which no serious claim to objectivity is made. There is no real antithesis between nature and spirit because we ourselves are both. ²

1. Schleiermacher, op. cit. p. 126

2. Ibid, p. 212. "Wir uns selbst beides sind, nicht nur dem Leiblichen nach Natur, sondern auch wegen der Notwendigkeit des Systems der Begriffe und der Gesamtheit der Urteile ist uns dieses die Natur des Geistes.....Ebenso ist die Natur Geist in der Gestalt." "

Schleiermacher ruled out the possibility of any novel or arbitrary development in nature which is not amenable to rational judgments; and, by the same token, he denied any supernatural ideas to the mind. Nature and mind are subject to a rigid determinism. Nothing can take place in either the sphere of nature or of mind to upset the correspondence between the two.¹ The conditionedness of all things, including the conscious I itself, became the basis for his religious principle of absolute dependence.

Upon this epistemological basis he superimposed his conception of God. The identity of the absolutely highest thought and highest being is not a mere postulate, but it is the element of certainty which accompanies every single act of knowing:

Wir können sagen, dass mit unserem Bewusstsein uns auch das Gottes gegeben ist als Bestandteil unseres Selbstbewusstseins sowohl, als unseres äusseren Bewusstseins.²

The presence of God in our consciousness is the basis of the unity of our beings in transition from thought to acts of willing, and also in the reverse movement from willing to thought.

1. Dilthey, Leben Schleiermachers, I. p. 170.
 "Notwendigkeit verbindet alles Geschehen im Weltall; das ist die Grundlage der Weltanschauung Schleiermachers."

2. Schleiermacher, op. cit. p. 216.

As the transcendental basis for the unity of thought and willing, of the intellectual order and the world order, God is not to be thought of as a Being outside the sphere of possible human perception. "Das Transcendente nur der Impuls ist zur Fortentwicklung des Bewusstseins." ¹ Moreover, in feeling, we possess a category of experience which yields an immediate awareness of the basis of the unity of thought and willing. ² Feeling is the immediate self-consciousness, in distinction from the reflective I, which merely expresses the idea of the identity of the self throughout various states. Feeling is also to be distinguished from perception, which simply conveys to consciousness the external effects of sensation.

We could not possess this unity of knowing and willing, through feeling, if we ourselves in our total subjective being were not conditioned by a unifying transcendental ground of consciousness itself. This transcendental ground of self-consciousness is not something separate from self-consciousness but it is its religious aspect. Our awareness that we are conditioned by a transcendental ground constitutes the religious

1. Ibid, p. 174.

2. Ibid, p. 217, "Im Gefühl ist die im Denken und Wollen bloss vorausgesetzte absolute Einheit des Idealen und Realen wirklich vollzogen."

feeling. ¹ In so far as we identify ourselves with the being of things and acknowledge the conditionedness of all being, this religious feeling is one of dependence. Religious feeling is not a mere internal affectation but it conveys the objective to us. The religious man knows that the unity of his self-consciousness is the Divine within him.

It is in fact only from an awareness of the Divine within us, and within things as they enter into our experience, that we are able to have a knowledge of Deity. We can have no knowledge of a being of God outside the world, or of the being of God in Himself. "Wir haben also nur insofern ein Begriff von ihm, als wir Gott sind, d.h. ihn in uns haben." ² Schleiermacher affirms that such terms for God as Absolute, Highest Unity, or Identity of the Ideal and the Real are only schemata; if they become constitutive, they fall into the realm of the finite and antithetical. They become then such concepts as the natura naturans of physical nature or the absolute Ego of consciousness, concepts which he regards as unsatisfactory. ³

1. Ibid, p. 218, "Diese transcendente Bestimmtheit des Selbstbewusstseins nun ist die religiöse Seite desselben, oder das religiöse Gefühl, und in diesem also ist der transcendente Grund oder das höchste Wesen selbst repräsentiert."

2. Ibid, p. 224.

3. Ibid, p. 224.

Schleiermacher wished to avoid making God a constitutive informing principle of the world. By refraining from conferring any objective attributes upon God, he represented Him simply as the presupposition or 'transcendental terminus a quo' of thought. The idea of the 'world' is likewise transcendental in that it is the infinite terminus ad quem of knowledge. The world, however, is partially actualized; and in the measure of its actualization, it is constitutive. The world becomes actualized as knowledge of it advances.

Having distinguished between God and the world as the terminus a quo and the terminus ad quem of thought, respectively, it is false to construe either an antithesis of God and world or an identity of the two. God is a unity without manifold, and the world is a manifold without unity. God negates all antitheses, and the world includes all antitheses. Since, in our thought, God and world are two distinct ideas, to make them antithetical or identical would be to go beyond the limits of real thinking. God and world should rather be construed as correlates. God cannot be thought without the world nor the world without God.¹ It is through experience of the world that we come upon the awareness of God, and without

1. Ibid, p. 227.

the concept of God we cannot arrive at an adequate formula for an understanding of the world. Apart from the world, God would be the principle of non-being, and the world without God would be accidental. ¹

In the Dialektik Schleiermacher attempts no further solution of the problem of the relation of God to the world. Dialectic, he says, is content without resolving the problem any more fully than to show that they are related as the terminus a quo and the terminus ad quem of knowledge. Ethical interest is satisfied with the simple assurance that God and the world are, in fact, related. It is religion which seeks to understand more intimately and fully the manner of the relation.

In his early religious work, the Reden, he undertook a general apology for religion. In his maturer work, the Glaubenslehre, he developed in detail the doctrines which constitute the deliverances of the specifically Christian religious consciousness. In the earlier work he sounded the note of individualism more strongly; later he placed more emphasis upon the community in the development of Christian doctrine.

He affirmed that the religious consciousness is the

1. Ibid, p.230. "Wenn Gott ohne Welt, wird Gott Prinzip des Nichtseins, die Welt zufällig."

innate possession of every man. Although it has to do with what is universal in man, it can only be expressed by man in so far as he is true to his individuality. In your own person you must embody humanity uniquely, becoming, as it were, a compendium of humanity. The general consciousness of the race continually perfects itself within the individual. It is from the primary intuition of the self that we come to a full and true intuition of the universe. The immediate self-consciousness is therefore the locus of piety; it does not arise out of a reflective view of the universe. Religion is sui generis. The carefully guarded position which Schleiermacher reserved for the religious 'faculty' led H.R. Mackintosh to comment that, on this view, "The pious mind as such knows nothing and does nothing." 1

Psychologically considered, the religious faculty is a third sense which unites internal and external sense, seeing in them an absolute unity. This unification is the "sphere of the individual, of what is complete in itself, of all that is art in nature, and in the works of man." 2 The universe is like a work of art, and religion is the artistic sense. Man's life is a melody which he must develop by accompanying every phase of his life with the rich variety of religion. Religion

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1. Mackintosh, Types of Modern Theology. p. 48
 2. Schleiermacher, Addresses on Religion. p. 137

can raise the melody to a glorious harmony. In the strictest sense, piety cannot be taught any more than it is possible to teach artistic taste, but that religious capacity which is the natural endowment of all men, to varying degree, may be developed and enriched through the ministry of individuals who have attained a high degree of religious development.

Religious piety is an immediate experience of the presence of God, as mediated through the experiential world:

Your feeling is piety in so far as it is the result of the operation of God in you by means of the operation of the world upon you. ¹

In content, piety is an immediate feeling of the Infinite and Eternal in the midst of our finite situation. ² Regardless of what particular finite study we may be engaged in, we can easily advance from it to an intuition of the universal. ³ The content of the religious feeling is never more than a knowledge of the manner of the operation of the universe upon us; it is not a knowledge of the nature of the universe in itself. Knowledge about the nature of things is far beneath the sphere of religion. The apprehension which we gain through

1. Ibid, p. 45

2. Dilthey, op. cit. p.341. "Das metaphysische Grundverhältnis, dessen Anschauung im Hintergrund der Reden steht, ist die Immanenz oder Gegenwart des Unendlichen, Ewigen im Endlichen."

3. Schleiermacher, op. cit., p. 86

the operation of the universe, viz., that God is present with us, is far more important than any objective knowledge about the nature of God.

The true nature of religion is neither this idea nor any other, but immediate consciousness of the Deity as He is found in ourselves and in the world. ¹

Revelation is not information which comes to man externally, to augment the ordinary sources of knowledge. Revelation is every new and original communication of the universe to man. Inspiration is a general expression for the feeling of true morality and freedom. Every sacred writing is a monument to the heroic time of the particular religion to which it belongs. ² The truths of religion are to be derived from a historical study of positive religions in their infinite variety. Although Schleiermacher believed that Christianity is the supreme religion, he would not agree that religion is exhaustively represented under any one form. It is to be comprehended under all forms.

His religious universalism was not a rational universalism such as the Deists had developed. The historical forms of religion are unique and are to be studied for their individual values. Religion must be discovered in the

1. Ibid, p. 101
2. Ibid, p. 89-91

religions; and in all of them, we shall discover some elements which are of the essence of true religion. There is a measure of uniformity amid the plurality of religions. The ground for giving a central place to some one religious element must be an historical fact. It was this historical approach to the positive religions which constituted Schleiermacher's inspiration and contribution to nineteenth century scientific research into the history and comparison of religions. He had placed Christianity on a common plane with other religions.

Schleiermacher judged Christianity to be the supreme manifestation of religion. It is a monotheistic teleological religion, differing from other religions in that its entire content relates to the redemption effected in Jesus Christ. The state of piety which is the subject for Christian dogmatics is the soul's experience of the spiritual life within the fellowship of the Christian Church at a given period of time. The method of dogmatics is strictly empirical. In the Glaubenslehre, where he systematically examines the features of the Christian religious consciousness, we may learn what he considers to be the distinctively Christian view of the relation between God and the world.

The immediate being of God in feeling is characterized by the attitude of absolute dependence. In the Dialektik, the

concepts of both God and the world had been formulated to serve the epistemological requirements of the knowing self. In the Glaubenslehre, the religious feeling of dependence tends to make the distinction between God and the world much more acute than in the epistemological formulation. When Schleiermacher equates 'absolute dependence' and 'relation to God' he means that God is the source of our perceptive and self-active existence. The feeling of absolute dependence represents something more than the mere conditionedness of our beings by the totality of temporal being, which we share with all other finite being.¹ Man differs from other finite being in that he alone possesses what might be called an original revelation, i.e., an awareness of his conditionedness. That awareness is his God-consciousness.

We do not need to build up a doctrine of God as an inference from isolated experiences; we have an immediate apprehension of God in the feeling of absolute dependence. Any separate attributes which we may ascribe to God do not represent differentiations within God Himself, but in the manner in which we apprehend Him. Our immediate apprehension of God is rendered possible because there is a oneness of human reason with the Divine mind. The faith of the Church that Christ was both human and Divine is witness to the capability of human nature to

1. Schleiermacher, Der Christliche Glaube. I, p. 20

assume the Divine nature. Consequently, the Divine mind is to be interpreted as the highest development of the human mind. There is no essential difference between the two. ¹ The only sense in which Christian truth is supra-rational consists in the fact that it is not to be scientifically deduced nor derived from a rational process. It rests instead upon the peculiarities of Christian experience, and its rationale consists of a description of that experience.

In our self-consciousness we recognize our union with the world as well as our union with God; but there is a distinction between the two. In our consciousness of union (Mitgesetztsein) with the world, we recognize ourselves to be a living part of the world: this obviously does not promote a feeling of absolute dependence. In our relation to other parts of the world we may have a feeling of dependence in respect of their action upon us, but we have also a feeling of freedom in respect of our action upon them. In the feeling of absolute dependence, however, we are conscious of a union with God in which He appears as the absolutely undivided unity, and not as a being who differentiates Himself into modes of active and passive in mutual interaction with finite beings. ² It is

1. Ibid, I, p. 82-4
2. Ibid, I, p. 169

clear that Schleiermacher has not departed from his theoretical view of God as the unitary terminus a quo of thought, despite the strength of his religious feeling of dependence.

Schleiermacher insists that even while we are experiencing the clearest awareness of unhindered self-activity the absoluteness of the feeling of dependence remains undiminished. If we were to make the mistake of referring the constant feeling of absolute dependence to our relation to the world, then we would, in effect, be denying the possibility of any freedom whatsoever in our relation to the world. Nevertheless, our immediate awareness of God in the feeling of absolute dependence, though distinguished from our feeling of belongingness to the world, is not separate from the world. We have no pious experience in vacuo, but always within the realm of nature. ¹

From the perspective of piety, it will be recognized that not only we ourselves, but the whole of finite being, exists in dependence upon the infinite. The feeling of absolute dependence excludes any concept of the genesis of the world which gives to any part of the world an origin outside of God. God would then be subject to the limitations of that independently existing world reality. Any equivalence between God and

1. Ibid, I, p. 179. "Es lässt sich aber keine christlich/ fromme Erregung denken, bei welcher wir uns nicht zugleich als in den Naturzusammenhang fänden."

an independent reality would compromise the feeling of absolute dependence:

Gleichheit und Abhängigkeit sich gegenseitig aufheben, und also das Endliche, sofern es Gott gleich wäre, nicht könnte schlechthin von ihm abhängig sein. ¹

On these principles, Schleiermacher stands for the doctrine of creation ex nihilo. God did not make use of independently-existing materials in creating the world. ² He created the world through a free determination of His own will; and to suggest that He could just as well not have created it, or that He had to create it, is to deny His free-will.

Although the idea of Divine creation appears to make God transcendent to the finite world, it must be pointed out again that for Schleiermacher, no definite thought of God can arise apart from our experience of Him within the context of finite being. ³ The sole exception to this is the bare thought of God as causality. Within finite being, however, our definitive thoughts of God are always mediated through His providential action in nature. His providence does not operate by special interjection into the course of nature but it consists of the

1. Ibid, I, p. 196

2. Ibid, I, p. 198

3. Selbie, Schleiermacher. p. 88. "To him God as transcendent is beyond knowledge, though the fact of his transcendence seems to be regarded as a legitimate inference from our consciousness of dependence."

constant generalized pressure of natural events. In every experience we are aware both of our dependence upon Divine Providence and of our complete conditionedness through natural processes. ¹ To place religious experience in the sphere of the supernatural (in the sense of the mysterious) would evoke a feeling of uncertainty rather than of dependence. The fact that awe-inspiring phenomena of nature sometimes awaken religious feeling does not imply an affinity of religion with the mysterious. The religious response to the awesome in nature is simply an awareness of our limitation by universal forces of nature.

The pious feeling is most complete when we identify ourselves with the whole world. ² In thought we must unite all that is individual and separate in experience into a whole which we reckon to be completely dependent upon God. By this identification of ourselves with the sum total of finite being, there arises a wonderful reciprocity between subjective religious and objective scientific knowledge. The objective consciousness then becomes religious in every aspect, and

1. Schleiermacher, *op. cit.* I, p. 224. "Die Richtung auf die Erkenntniss der Welt eben so wesentlich in der menschlichen Seele ist als die auf das Gottesbewusstsein."

2. *Ibid.*, I, p. 227. "Jenes Gefühl ist am vollständigsten wenn wir uns mit der ganzen Welt identificiren."

likewise, the religious self-consciousness has a perfect world-consciousness at all times.

Schleiermacher maintains that it has always been acknowledged by Christian theologians that the Divine Providence and natural causality are not to be separated or limited by one another. They are the same ordering of the world, regarded from different viewpoints. He acknowledges the pantheistic tendencies of this position, but he throws the onus of blame upon human thought in general for its failure to construe a universally recognized formula for the relation between God and the world. As if dismissing the problem, he says that until such an 'accepted' solution arises, a wavering between views which tend to mix God and world in identity, and views which oppose them, cannot be avoided. ¹

In an early section of the Glaubenslehre he had emphasized that, in his description of the religious consciousness, he had nothing to do with pantheism because it has never been the confession of any historical religious community. The fluidity of his thought concerning this problem is clear, however, when he goes on in the same reference to suggest that even if pantheism, in its usual formula of the One and the All,

1. Ibid, I, p. 228

were held to be the adequate description of the highest state of piety, God and the world would still remain separate in their functions. As individuals within the World-All, we would still feel ourselves dependent upon the One. From a practical viewpoint the pantheist and the monotheist have a similar sense of devotion. To insist, moreover, upon a too-distinct and rigid separation between the internal and external relations of God to the world would endanger the doctrines of His omniscience and omnipresence. ¹

In his treatment of the Divine attributes Schleiermacher draws heavily upon the one attribute of cause to explain all others. The attribute of omnipotence expresses the fact that the Divine causality is the same in scope as the totality of natural causes. When he goes on to define God as eternal, he sees no conflict in the thought that the omnipotent action of a non-temporal Being has been equated with temporal causation. God's action is co-terminous with temporal action because His timeless causality conditions even time itself. ²

In the same manner, the attribute of omnipresence does not identify God with all spaces but expresses the fact that the

1. Ibid, II, p. 50

2. Ibid, I, p. 268. "Unter der Ewigkeit Gottes verstehen wir die mit allem zeitlichen auch die Zeit selbst bedingende schlechthin zeitlose Ursächlichkeit Gottes."

non-spatial causality of God conditions all spatial realities and also space itself. ¹

In his description of God as spaceless and timeless omnipotent causality, he shows himself to be striving after a transcendent concept of God. But in dealing with the above attributes he has clearly betrayed his own principle that God can be defined only in terms of the religious experience mediated through the experiential world. We can have no mediate experience of either a spaceless or timeless being. Schleiermacher himself argues in the same section of the Glaubenslehre against transcendent attributes, when he affirms that the being of God and the activity of God can never be separated. God possesses no knowledge apart from his productive thought, which is reflected in the world of His creation. ² By this identification of the will and action of God Schleiermacher rejects the Scholastic distinction between mediate and immediate causes. ³

When Schleiermacher comes to deal with Christology and redemption he affects a seeming break in his deterministic doctrine that the thought and action of God are identical, and

1. Ibid, I, p. 273.

2. Ibid, I, p. 295. "Gott weiss alles was ist, und alles ist was Gott weiss, und dieses beides ist nicht zweierlei sondern einerlei, weil sein Wissen und sein allmächtiges Wollen eines und dasselbe ist."

3. Ibid, I, p. 285.

His causation universal. He speaks of the coming of Christ into the world as a 'miracle', designed to restore the state of disorder which has been created by free causes (human beings). He stresses, however, that the free causes have not actually altered anything in the original course of events ordered by God. Christ is not otherwise related to the system of nature than are the other free causes. ¹ The 'miracle' of Christ, then, is merely the 'relatively unique' rise of a Free Cause whose activity is redemptive in relation to the other free causes. The redemption which Christ came to effect was not made necessary by any rupture in the original course of nature. Sin has no cosmic significance.

In the final analysis, the free causes have only a chimerical, relative freedom. Free causes, along with natural causes, are actually determined by God. ² The difference between God's action in free causes and His action in natural causes lies simply in the fact that He works in every cause in a manner appropriate to its particular method of acting. The seeming difference in the quality of causes may be only a difference in degree, e.g., in the life of the individual the antithesis between freedom and mechanism is merely a

1. Ibid, I, p. 236.

2. Ibid, I, p. 248. "Ob das was unser Selbstbewusstsein erregt, mithin auf uns einwirkt, auf irgend einen Theil des sogenannten Naturmechanismus zurückzuführen ist, oder auf die Thätigkeit freier Ursachen: das eine ist vollkommen eben so wie das andere von Gott geordnet."

difference between the great and the small. ¹ In life's larger creative experiences we feel ourselves to be free; in the minor details of life we are conscious of limitation.

The basis of Christ's redemptive action upon other men is the sinless perfection of His character and His highly developed religious consciousness. He did not come clothed in supernatural grace and power, but in Him the Ideal Man became historical, and completely so. The coming of Christ and His institution of a new corporate life is a completion of the possibilities of human nature which were latent at creation. ²

The mode of Christ's redemptive activity consists in the power of His life to strengthen our impaired God-consciousness when we relate ourselves to Him in a mystical faith. Both our sense of need and Christ's answer to that need are immanently conceived:

Die höchste Leistung Christi darin besteht uns so zu beseelen, dass eine immer vollkommene Erfüllung des göttlichen Willens auch von uns ausgeht. ³

Schleiermacher emphasized the human response and self-activity in religious life, as against a passive submission to supernaturally bestowed grace.

1. Ibid, I, p. 254.

2. Ibid, II, p. 19. "So ist...die Erscheinung Christi selbst anzusehen als Erhaltung, nämlich der von Anbeginn der menschlichen Natur eingepflanzten und sich fortwährend entwickelnden Empfänglichkeit der menschlichen Natur eine solche schlechthinige Kräftigkeit des Gottesbewusstseins in sich aufzunehmen."

3. Ibid, II, p. 135.



When Schleiermacher speaks of the union of the human and the Divine in Christ he does not conceive of Him as being very God and true man after the language of the traditional creeds. He protests against the idea of Christ's nature being split into two parts. The Divine in Christ is the active side of His nature and the human is the passive side. ¹ That which transpires in the nature of Christ because of the singular degree of the Divine in Him is altogether a human development and constitutes a unity of the natural course of life. Schleiermacher does not find adequate support in Scripture for ascribing Divine names to Christ. The Scripture which represents Christ as participating in creation and providence is so expressed as to make it doubtful if it was not rather intended to portray Him as the final cause (Endursache) of creation. ²

He rejects the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as the Third Person of the Trinity. Belief in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit often leads men to fanaticism and individualism, which causes them to disregard their need of the historic Christ and the Christian fellowship. He prefers to designate the Holy Spirit as the common spirit (Gemeingeist) of the

1. Ibid, II, p. 70

2. Ibid, II, p. 93

Christian community with which it strives to attain to a unity of the whole. ¹ The Holy Spirit is not a general characteristic of human nature, but it is the peculiar property of the Christian community, it is their distinctive spirit. The Holy Spirit does not have a character different from men, any more than did Christ. It is only by its affinity with our natures that the Holy Spirit can have a real connection with our life. The Church, so inspired by the Holy Spirit, is not a transcendental or mystical body; it is the perfect image of the Redeemer, and each redeemed individual constitutes an actual part of the Church.

A final estimation of Schleiermacher's position is rendered difficult by the fact that he endeavoured to take both sides on the problem which we are investigating. It is obvious that he sought to preserve a concept of the transcendence of God in making Him sole creative cause. In reality, however, this concept bears a striking resemblance to Spinoza's natura naturans, the active side of unitary nature. God has no constitutive reality outside the world of nature: He is a mere thought. It is clearly not Schleiermacher's intention to represent God in the form of Aristotle's teleological actus purus. The religious feeling of dependence demands that God

1. Ibid, II, p. 245.

be prior to the creation which is determined by Him and dependent upon Him as efficient cause. Epistemologically, however, Schleiermacher will not admit the implications of this religious demand, namely, that God must have attributes other than those mediated through that same phenomenal world which is dependent upon Him for its existence. God, as a bare distinction of thought, is little different from Spinoza's distinction of active as against passive modes of substance. On Schleiermacher's principles God can have no being apart from His actuality. The causality of God is exhaustively represented in the totality of finite being.¹ To be more than a thought or a name He has to be known in rebus. He has no transcendent being or attributes.

At times, Schleiermacher adopts a facile practical attitude in which he lightly dismisses his epistemological problems. In an early section of the Glaubenslehre he insists that dogmatic terminology must avoid any expressions which fail to retain a distinction between God and the world, between good and evil, and between the spiritual and the sensual, for these are the original presuppositions of the religious self-consciousness. Without the presupposition of these distinctions, no God-consciousness could be opposed to a world-consciousness,

1. Ibid, I, p. 280.

nor could we speak of the need of redemption and of its fulfilment. ¹ On the other hand, as we noted earlier, he is prepared to suggest that there is no serious practical distinction between the religious consciousness of the pantheist and that of the monotheist.

It seems patent that Schleiermacher's Moravian religious feeling and his Kantian epistemology were at war with one another, and the tension left an indefiniteness on the pages of his writings. His religious feeling sensed the dependence of the self and the phenomenal world upon a transcendent reality, while his epistemology excluded the possibility of recognizing or characterizing any supernatural elements.

In spite of the wavering in Schleiermacher's Weltanschauung, the new outlook which he contributed to nineteenth century theology was definitely weighted toward an immanentist position. His work was strongly informed with psychologism and historicism, emphases which were reflected during the course of the century in monumental research into the psychology and history of religions. The centre of theological research gravitated from Scripture and Creeds to religious experience and comparative religion.

1. Ibid, I, p. 151, 2.

B. Vinet

In the French-speaking world the thought of Alexander Vinet (1797-1847), the Swiss theologian and literator, left an impression similar to that of Schleiermacher in Germany. ¹ Vinet was a leading figure in the 'awakening' movement which stirred the Churches of Western Europe in the early nineteenth century, a movement largely promoted by English free-churchmen. Vinet, however, was a man of much more liberal views than his associates. In common with Schleiermacher, his thought played a transitional role in the trend away from the old orthodoxy to a new and liberal position in which religious experience was regarded as of more importance than the historic dogma. Vinet found the seat of religious authority not in Creed, Church or Scripture, but in the moral consciousness of the individual. Morality and religion were synonymous terms for him. ²

Vinet earned for himself the title of 'the Pascal of Protestantism' with his view that the human heart is both the subject and the instrument of the study of religion. For Vinet

1. Lane, The Life and Writings of Alexander Vinet, p. ix (Intr. by F.W. Farrar) "There has always existed in the French-speaking churches an elite who feel for Vinet much of the enthusiasm that the Germans display with regard to Schleiermacher. All parties claimed him for their own."

2. Chavannes, Alexandre Vinet, p. 29. "Il a pris le point d'appui de sa démonstration dans la nature morale et religieuse de l'homme."

religion is not metaphysics. If we indulge in pure dialectics we end in sophistry and with the banishing of reason itself. The intellect knows only abstractions, whereas the heart sees beings and substances. Logic was not intended by God to govern human life: the nobility of man consists in believing without proof. The intellect is not to be excluded, but it is inadequate to judge of matters pertaining to the moral order. "The things of the heart are only truly understood by the heart." ¹

He insisted that reason cannot create facts; it can only receive them. Truth is given as a sovereign act of God. In the interpretation of the given truth, the heart, although it does not think, determines the point of view from which we think. We do not begin to think with a bare ego, without qualities of life. We are preoccupied thinkers. We require a starting-point from which our system of thought may arise. "Passion is better qualified than argument to solve great questions." ² Error in thinking is more often caused by a defect in the depths of the soul than by a misuse of the intellect.

In order to be understood, Christianity must first be incorporated into the life. Not speculation, but conscience declares the reality of God's existence. From the perspective

1. Vinet, Outlines of Philosophy and Literature. p. 69.
 2. Ibid, p. 89.

of faith, Christian doctrine becomes clear to the intellect. ¹ Unlike Pascal, Vinet did not oppose faith to reason. He believed that moral motives and content merely supply the basis of philosophy. ² On the basis of the moral and religious life, Vinet sought to unify the whole of human experience. In Christianity he believed that he had found the ultimate religion, whose phenomena penetrate more deeply into the soul than all other elements of life. Since for Vinet, the true religion leads to true Philosophy, Christianity is therefore "the first and last philosophy." ³

In founding religion upon a moral basis, and, in fact, identifying it therewith, Vinet followed a different course from Schleiermacher. The latter had made the religious faculty independent of both morals and metaphysics. Vinet's positive relation to Kant in this regard is more apparent than real. Religious truths are not postulates arrived at discursively to fulfil a pre-condition of moral life; but the moral sense provides us with an immediate awareness of religious truth. Morality is religion, and a religion which is not morality is

1. Lane, op. cit., p. 49. "For Vinet faith becomes reason, and reason becomes faith."

2. Vinet, op. cit., p. 89. "Systems spring from morals, and the direction taken by the intellect is explained by the state of society."

3. Ibid, p. 139.

of no value. "Religion is morality stamped with the divine seal." ¹ The just instinct of people in general demands that a religious man will be moral and that a moral man will be religious.

It is the moral character of religion which prevents religious thought from becoming merged with a philosophic monism or pantheism. Christianity escapes this danger because it is the moral religion par excellence. The Christian feels himself to be under obligation, and he is humbled before a Law-Giver who is other than himself.

Vinet's elevation of conscience and morality to become the basis of religion and, thereby, the basis of a true philosophy, carried with it a stress on the individuality of belief and action. Individuality, for Vinet, is to be distinguished from individualism, which is selfishness. The term individuality, as applied to the moral life, signifies that only in the individual is there a conscience and only through individual moral action can a betterment of society be effected. Collectivism is a constant danger to mankind. ² The Church is a society of individual Christians, and there is no fictional Kingdom of God which is the special sphere of the Divine

1. Vinet, op. cit., p. 118.

2. Vinet, Mélanges, p. 102. "Toutes les constitutions, tous les systèmes politiques menacent l'individualité."

indwelling. ¹ The universality of the moral sense in mankind does not imply that it is of equal value in all. Its individual character leaves room for distinctions of worth, e.g., as between the godly and relatively worldly conscience. The Christian conscience is distinct: "Christian policy ceases to be Christian so soon as it ceases to appear strange and absurd to one of the world." ²

If conscience is not a diffuse, generalized Divine element in man it is, none the less, the seat of Divine immanence in man. He describes conscience as "that mysterious and divine element of our being, inseparable from our nature." ³ The possession of this element colours all our thinking and constitutes us men. Conscience has no legislative force upon our natures if it is separated from the thought of God, for we would then be able to accept or reject the behests of conscience at will.

Conscience is a token of the impress of a powerful hand upon us; it leads every thinking man back to at least a confused thought of God:

1. Vinet's extreme stress upon individuality led him eventually to leave the national Church and to become one of the founders of the Free Church of the Canton of Vaud, formed in 1845.

2. Outlines of Philosophy, p. 360.

3. Vinet, Outlines of Theology, p. 1.

Right, duty, are the points where man ends and God begins; with them we penetrate into a sphere where man contemplates as his aim something external to himself. ¹

This Other, which we recognize in the course of the employment of our moral sense, we identify as God. The belief in God is inherent within man. Indeed, we may go further than this and say that the faculty which leads us to the apprehension of God is in very truth God Himself:

Conscience is not us, it is against us; it is therefore other than we. If it be other than we, it can only be God. ²

It is not Vinet's intention, however, to represent God as being exhaustively actualized in the conscience. At other times he speaks of conscience as the 'ambassador' or as the 'vice-regent' of God. Though present in conscience, God is also above it. "Whatever be the dignity of conscience -- a dignity borrowed from God -- God will not be supplanted by conscience." ³ Vinet had encountered the difficulty associated with making any particular element of human life the point of contact with God. If that element be absolutely deified it ceases to be human, and thereby ceases to be the intended point of contact. It seems clear throughout Vinet's thought that he

1. Ibid, p. 10.

2. Ibid, p. 12.

3. Ibid, p. 13.

wished to regard conscience as a distinctive property of human life.

Vinet made conscience the basis of Divine-human relations because he believed that in the moral life are found the deepest reaches of human experience. Reason may conduct man by a process of deduction up to the point of belief in God, but it is only conscience which can receive this belief and interpret the law of God to the self. It is through hearing the commands of God that we understand His nature.¹ The phenomena of the moral life are determinative of dogma, in a manner similar to Schleiermacher's empirical approach to dogmatics. Vinet recognizes that this relation of morals and dogmas in religion is what is so disconcerting to the systematic spirit; but he himself denies the possibility of achieving an orderly rational system.

The religion of conscience enables one to enter into a personal relation with God. In the experience of moral demand and in the responsive exercise of duty, we feel ourselves to be related to an Other. The essence of religion is to obey not ourselves or a self-imposed law, or an idea, but a Person. Awareness of moral demand mediated by a Person is a safeguard

1. Ibid, p. 121, 2. "The dogmas are supernatural facts, in which is expressed a moral thought, so that from one end to the other of this religion, all is moral."

against mysticism, which is the annihilation of morality and religion. Humanity requires for its God, a God who is personal:

An impersonal God is to humanity nothing, by the very reason that he is all. If he is the universe, if he is whatever is, ourselves included, then our relations cease in this fusion. ¹

He defines Pantheism as "the idea of fatalism, combined with that of order and of unity"; it is nothing more than "an emphatic and solemn atheism." ² Although God has created the universe, granting it a constitution and embracing in His thought the whole chain of successive causes, He remains still the absolute monarch over the creation. God is supreme also in the moral governance of His creatures, but His supremacy stops short of being a determinism. It is in fact man's moral freedom and individuality, rather than a substantial differentiation, which distinguishes him from God. He affirms,

We dare to see in humanity the Eve of God, drawn from the substance of God as was that other Eve from the substance of Adam, but invested with spontaneity, with liberty, and alone able, in the universality of things, to say I, as God says I, distinguishing itself at once both from things and from God; separated from God in order to be able to unite. ³

On the issue of human freedom, however, Vinet wavers, as he does on many other questions. There are instances where

1. Ibid, p. 150.

2. Vinet, Outlines of Philosophy, pp. 105 & 107.

3. Ibid, p. 116.

he seems to equate the human response in moral action to the providential work of God:

In the moral world, the force of God -- a thing inconceivable -- composes itself of our forces, in the same way that the work of his providence is very often the sum of our actions.....The whole work of salvation, from its origin to its consummation belongs to God. ¹

In thus equivocating on the issue of moral freedom, Vinet compromises his one safeguard against Pantheism.

In spite of Vinet's attempt to preserve, on a moral basis, the sphere of humanity and individuality, in distinction from God, the tendency of his thought is constantly in the direction of lessening the distinction between man and God. He believes that because God has created us in His image the attributes we ascribe to God are those of which we find the germ within ourselves, to which we add the idea of perfection, ² At one time he describes the human and the Divine as two poles of the same truth, or again, as two parallel lines meeting in infinity:

The doctrine of man and that of God, are two lines which tending towards each other, finally join and blend at the vertex of the angle, at a point which is one and indivisible, where all distinctions elude the eye, and all analysis is impossible to the mind. ³

The weakness of theology is that it finds difficulty in refraining from leaning too far to one side or the other, being too

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1. Outlines of Theology, pp. 168,9.
 2. Ibid, p. 14.
 3. Ibid, p. 106.

far removed from the vertex of the angle. On the other hand,

A living faith occupies the vertex itself, in the mystery or in the life, whence it dominates the two sides, or two inclines of truth, without leaning to either. ¹

It may be true, as Vinet holds, that for a living faith the problem of duality disappears; but it remains important for theology to understand precisely how it is resolved. If a living faith is an experience in which the two sides are identified at a point standing beyond the possibility of mental analysis, it is difficult to see how this experience is any less pantheistic than the concept of a philosophic monism. At best, it is an experience of mystic identification, to which he declares himself opposed.

However mysterious this harmonizing life of faith may be, Vinet thinks that he can point to one person who uniquely embodies unity between God and the world -- that is, Jesus Christ. "It is only in Jesus Christ that you will find both the God who is in nature, and the God who is above nature." ² God has become manifest under the veil of the Incarnation. In the term 'Immanuel' we have the beginning and end of Christian dogma. In Vinet's discussion of the Incarnation we note his tendency to interpret Christian doctrine in terms of the needs

1. Ibid, p. 108.

2. Ibid, p. 46.

of man, rather than to make doctrinal affirmations: "Humanity demands a god-man, and an historical religion; humanity never was, never will be deistic." ¹

The need of the God-man is implicit within man's moral nature. Man conceives of morality as indivisible and he knows that when he has offended against one law he has offended against all. ² Our awareness of the standard of right action and perception of our own imperfection implies the Fall of man. Man is in need of an expiation and this is what Jesus Christ came to provide. Vinet speaks with passionate earnestness of the love of God, manifested in Jesus Christ, which incites an answering love within man. It is only in a God who is love that humanity is able to believe. From all time, man had nursed within him an ideal of pure love, and was still awaiting its realization when Christ came, but awaits it no longer since the Crucifixion. By this sacrifice of love Christ provides for us the sole way to God and hope of consolation in Him.

Jesus Christ for all time reinstated human nature from its ruins so that by faith in Him we may obey the voice of conscience, which before had lain dormant. Through Christ's

1. Outlines of Philosophy, p. 151. cf. Outlines of Theology, p. 153. "The truth that God must unite with man, and become man.....is implanted at the foundation of human nature."
 2. Vinet, Mélanges, p. 9. "En morale, la vérité est une."

redemption, everything in human nature takes its proper place. 'Natural man' is therefore properly the term applied to the regenerate man. The Christian ethic, which belongs to the regenerate life, is not an other-worldly ethic; but Christ revealed the perfect human standard of virtue. ¹

In his attempt to relate traditional Christian dogma to his predisposing view that religion is moral in nature, Vinet omits or modifies those dogmas which fail to qualify under his humanizing process. ² Truth for man must be human truth: "The limits of his knowledge are the limits of his nature." ³ Vinet insists that Christianity accords well with these limits of human knowledge. "The glory of the Gospel is not only to have divinized truth, but to have humanized it." ⁴ He affirms that revelation is necessary, but he deprives it of any supernatural signification. It is the means by which God assists us to listen to the still small voice of conscience within us. "Revelation gives certainty, a new sense, to truths that were presupposed, but not yet living." ⁵ The facts of revelation

1. Outlines of Theology, p. 55. "The virtues that he made so resplendent on the cross are human virtues in their perfection; they are intended for our use, proposed for our meditations; these examples form part of our inheritance."

2. Chavannes, Alexandre Vinet, p. 60. "Son étude morale de l'humanité l'amenait à laisser dans l'ombre, à négliger absolument, tout ce qui dans la notion traditionnelle de l'Évangile ne répondait pas aux nécessités de son entreprise, à ses propres aspirations."

3. Outlines of Philosophy, p. 4.

4. Outlines of Theology, p. 106.

5. Ibid, p. 93.

are perfectly human and Divine, of which Christ's teaching is the supreme example. In the pulpit, as well as in theological discussion, it is preferable to treat the so-called objective truths of religion as internal moral facts, and to recognize that faith in the Infinite is literally a law of man's being. ¹

The correspondence between Christianity and humanity is so complete that a proper concept of either one should lead us back to the other. Faith is reducible to nature, and vice versa. Involuntarily, in our words and actions, we render testimony to the doctrines of Christianity. Faith is the genius of the human heart. The perfect correspondence of Christianity with universal human nature supports the conviction that Christianity is the final religion. It will always be a step ahead of civilization, no matter how far the latter may advance. "It is in vain for the world to resist; it is Christian in spite of itself." ²

It is only because of our sin that we observe seeming paradoxes in Christianity. Even as the highest mountains cast the longest shadows, so the sublimity of Christianity makes it seem mysterious to us. The Gospel is wider than life, and just

1. Chavannes, op. cit., p. 45. "Il n'a nullement établi la nécessité et la réalité d'une révélation surnaturelle communiquant aux hommes une religion dogmatique."

2. Vinet, op. cit., p. 101.

because of that fact, it may appear strange to us in many of its aspects. But the breadth of the Gospel enables it to occupy the same position as the horizon in relation to the sensible world. It embraces the entire world in a harmony in which nothing jars. It corrects and organizes everything in the world, creating thereby scope for all our powers and a horizon for all our thoughts:

The divine life and the human life blend with each other. like the blood of the arteries with that of the veins, and the blood of the veins with that of the arteries without a drop escaping and being lost. ¹

Everything that is true is Christian; Christian truth is a centre pointing outward to all scattered truths and is also a confluence towards which they tend. Christianity therefore shows its sovereignty in its ability to assimilate all oppositions, and to save the whole of man and the whole of life. "For the Christian nothing is profane, everything tends to holiness." ²

Vinet was neither a systematic metaphysician nor a dogmatic theologian, and consequently an ambiguity shrouds his thought, which took shape in sermons and essays rather than in sustained treatises. The total weight of evidence, however, leaves it clearly manifest that with all his moral earnestness

1. Ibid, p. 104.

2. Ibid, p. 305.

and the evangelical fervour of his sermons, he failed to retain a distinction between God and human nature adequate to support the rigour of the moral order which he championed. Although he claimed that conscience is the Divine element in man, he interpreted the deliverances of the moral consciousness (religion) strictly within the limits of human nature and in harmony with its truth. His respect for traditional elements of the Gospel cannot obscure this fact. Both morality and religion, which he identified, are weakened by an attenuated theism, in terms of which Divine truth is synonymous with human truth, and Divine revelation is the stimulation and authentication of an inner law of our own beings.

CHAPTER III.

GERMAN IDEALISM

The German idealist philosophy, which exerted a far-reaching influence on nineteenth century theology, has been treated by Hoffding under the general designation of 'The Philosophy of Romanticism.'¹ In the philosophy of idealism the All-nature of Goethe became the Spirit-nature of an absolutism of mind. The idealist movement reached its most powerful philosophical expression in Hegel, but an introductory outline of its development through Fichte and Schelling will serve to clarify his position.

A. Fichte

J. G. Fichte (1762-1813) undertook, in his Wissenschaftslehre, to present a re-statement of the Kantian philosophy. He aimed at eliminating the bifurcation between theoretical and practical philosophy, and between the knowing process and the unknown thing-in-itself which Kant had retained as the substrate of the object of knowledge. Kant had shown that all determinations of knowable reality are dependent upon an independent action of the mind, an action which can be

1. A History of Modern Philosophy, Vol. II.

traced back to an original unity of apperception which must be postulated within the Ego. Fichte adopted this original unity, making it independent of any thing-in-itself as the ground of experience. The only objects which exist, exist for the mind. Fichte also added to the province of the Ego the sphere of practical philosophy which Kant had kept separate from the knowing process. Kant's moral postulates were no longer metaphysical grounds for the fulfilment of moral living, but became the immanent grounds of moral action. Fichte was attempting to bring the Critical Philosophy under a single, unifying principle conceived in terms of the activity of Ego.

Fichte held that only two possible accounts can be given of the origin and process of knowledge, the dogmatic and the idealist. He accepted the idealist account as the only genuinely critical philosophy. The inadequacy of the dogmatic approach lies in the fact that it sets another being than the self over against the self, making it the source of truth. In Kant's philosophy it had been the thing-in-itself. Fichte discards this last vestige of dogmatism which remained in the Critical Philosophy.

Man is self-conscious, active and free. In all that enters into his consciousness, his own intelligence is presupposed. Dogmatism tends to be determinist and materialist in making some fictional thing-in-itself the cause of

intelligence. The idealist maintains that if he thinks any object whatsoever he has to relate the object to himself. The object does not exist for itself. The dogmatist tries to link his unknowable world to the intelligence by means of the concept of causality, while the idealist requires no mediating concept to unite the mind with its objects of knowledge:

Im kritischen Systeme ist das Ding das im Ich gesetzte; im dogmatischen dasjenige, worin das Ich selbst gesetzt ist: der Criticism ist darum immanent, weil er alles in das Ich setzt; der Dogmatism transcendent, weil er noch über das Ich hinausgeht. ¹

The development of Fichte's immanent science of knowledge may be comprehended through the explication of three propositions which form the basis of his approach to knowledge: 1) The Ego posits itself; 2) The Ego also posits the non-Ego; 3) The Ego is able to posit the Ego and the non-Ego as limiting one another in experience; and this very fact points to the absoluteness of the Ego. These three propositions may be otherwise stated in logical terms as identity, opposite and ground. When these three basic terms are amplified to become the general method of the synthetic process of knowledge they are known as the thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, the triadic form of reasoning which attained its most powerful use in Hegel's system. In the thought of Fichte this triadic process

1. Fichte, Wissenschaftslehre, Werke, I Abth. Bd. I, p. 120

illustrates his fundamental conviction that the Ego is an activity which, going out from itself, returns again to itself as the presupposed unity of the process.

The Ego posits itself as being identical with itself throughout a process of reasoning. The proposition $A = A$ could not be made except we posit the identical self in whose consciousness both subject and predicate of the proposition are held together. Since all our knowledge is propositional, an object cannot become a real object of knowledge unless it be referred to the Ego. "Alles was ist, ist nur insofern, als es im Ich gesetzt ist, und ausser dem Ich ist nichts."¹ Therefore, in order to account for the knowledge of reality which enters into its consciousness in empirical experience, the Ego is obliged to posit itself.

Experience also leads us to more involved propositional statements than those of simple identity. In empirical experience we observe differences among objects, and the Ego is obliged to make propositions of the form, not-A is not = A. Similarly, we encounter in empirical experience that which is not the Ego but is over against it as an object, and the Ego is obliged to make the proposition, the non-Ego is not = the Ego.

We have now made two propositions, one of which

1. Ibid, p. 99.

implies the existence of the self-identical Ego, while the other implies the existence of the non-Ego. These two propositions obviously limit one another. Within the bounds of Fichte's presupposition that nothing exists except in so far as it is posited within the Ego, this is a serious antinomy. How can the non-Ego exist for the Ego, and how is the Ego capable of making a proposition which affirms the existence of the non-Ego?

Fichte answers that there is a third act of consciousness which resolves the antinomy created by its positing of both the Ego and the non-Ego. The third act is that of synthesis, which unites the two opposites without destroying either. The Ego and non-Ego which are posited in the immediate empirical consciousness are not independent absolutes; they are limited by each other, and so exist only in a relation of one to the other. They are simply what we call the subject and object in our empirical consciousness. The combining of subject and object is the synthetic activity of the Absolute Ego, which is able to posit both and to reunite them again. The Absolute Ego is the ideal ground of experience. It cannot itself be differentiated by means of any empirical distinctions, for it would then descend into the realm of the antithesis which exists between the empirical Ego and non-Ego. The Absolute Ego is, none the less, the presupposition of empirical

experience. The process of thought which begins with the positing of the Ego, ends in the positing of the Absolute Ego. This highest synthesis of the system is also the absolute thesis or presupposition upon which the whole system is based.¹

The Absolute Ego, because it contains all reality and all accidents within itself, is self-positing. It is an Infinite Idea which cannot itself be thought, but towards which we can only point. Theoretical science can take us no farther than this in characterizing the Absolute Ego. We must turn to practical science for a fuller characterization. In our practical experience we have an awareness that the relation of the Absolute Ego to the limited moments of the empirical Ego and non-Ego within it, takes the form of an infinite activity. Indeed, without this movement Fichte's system in its triadic form could not be thought at all. The possibility of the Ego experiencing the moments of a dialectic process requires the prior assumption that there is a movement toward a synthesis. If there is no activity in the system then we would possess a moment of consciousness but no complete experience.

1. Ibid, p. 119. "Ich und Nicht-Ich, sowie sie durch den Begriff der gegenseitigen Einschränkung gleich-und entgegengesetzt werden, sind selbst beide etwas (Accidenzen) im Ich, als theilbarer Substanz; gesetzt durch das Ich, als absolutes unbeschränkbares Subject, dem nichts gleich ist, und nichts entgegengesetzt ist."

The activity of the Absolute Ego is a moral striving which is unceasing so long as existence lasts. The non-Ego is the sphere of duty for the finite Ego; its opposition to the Ego represents a challenge to be overcome. The non-Ego is not self-activating because it is not self-existent. The source of activity in the moral equation must then come from the Ego in its infinitude. Consequently the Ego, in its infinitude, is the ideal ground, and, in its self-limitation and moral activity, the real ground of all that takes place. Fichte thought that he had united in his system both idealism and realism. ¹

The Absolute Ego could not affirm itself without becoming finite in the consciousness of the finite Ego with its objects of consciousness. Self-consciousness is dependent upon objects foreign to itself. This is the sole limitation upon the Absolute Ego. Because it is infinite, however, it is able to place the limit between self and the objective where it will. The limit is not an absolute, and the goal of moral striving is to break down the limit which has been set up. The finite Ego has a yearning for the infinite and seeks to resolve the dualism between itself and its object.

The finite, however, remains infinitely remote from the Absolute Ego, even to the last moment that we can conceive

1. Ibid, pp. 174-6.

in eternity; hence we must posit the immortality of the soul. If the end of the soul's striving should ever be reached it would become the Infinite or God, and this would represent the end of all experience. Experience depends for its actualization upon an objective limit to the self. The goal of self-assertion and the moral struggle is, then, the effacement of self-conscious experience; but it is a goal which is never actually reached.

The Infinite or God, the goal of consciousness and also its presupposition, is pure consciousness rather than self-conscious personality.¹ But He is not transcendent to the self. Fichte found God, freedom and immortality, all of Kant's moral postulates, immanent within the Ego itself. He does not need to go outside the Ego to find transcendent grounds for the possibility of the moral life. His view of God and his view of ontology are one and the same. God is the absolute synthesis which, though never the content of consciousness or in Himself self-conscious, is the impulse which forms our nature and shapes for us the external world of duty. He is the eternal will working in history and in the individual, the power within us which makes for righteousness.

1. Everett, Fichte's Science of Knowledge, p. 256. "With Spinoza, all beings are one with God; with Fichte, they tend to become so."

In his later work, The Way Towards the Blessed Life, Fichte characterizes the will of God as absolute knowledge, His action as absolute love. This appears to be a more objective view of God and of His attributes; but Fichte still does not go outside the Ego and its ideas. "The Eternal can be apprehended only by Thought, and is in no other way approachable by us." ¹ There is no real existence beyond the life of thought, and to live the blessed life means to discern the truth. The outer world of sense is founded upon universal thought. Outward sense is simply "the remotest extremity of the nascent spiritual life." ² A true consciousness, though observing the outer manifold of the external world, believes only in the Unchangeable and Eternal. The external manifold exists only in thought, for us, and has no true being:

Besides God himself, there is truly, and in the proper sense of the word, no other Existence whatever but --- Knowledge; and this Knowledge is the Divine Ex-istence (Dasein) itself, absolutely and immediately; and so far as we are Knowledge, we are ourselves, ³ in the deepest root of our being, the Divine Ex-istence.

This differentiation of Himself into the existence of knowing subjects, presupposes the unmoved Being of God. He remains a unity throughout the transition of His differentia from being to existence. Change is an attribute of existence,

1. The Way Towards the Blessed Life, p. 11.

2. Ibid, p. 44.

3. Ibid, p. 60.

and not of God in Himself. Fichte rejects the idea of a Divine creation; it is a conception which utterly escapes thought.¹ Having no place in his system for the thing-in-itself, he needed no concept of causation or of a creator.

Fichte believed that in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel he found support for his philosophy. The Divine Logos of the Fourth Gospel is eternal and exists prior to all the manifold of the world. The Logos is a rational principle; and it is only as rational being that God has existence in the world. The historicity of the 'Word became flesh' is not to be taken in a once-for-all sense. Jesus continually becomes flesh in all those individuals who have a living insight into His unity with God: "He who is transformed into the likeness of Jesus, and thereby into that of God, he no longer lives himself but God lives in him."² For man to renounce himself entirely and to become one with God is the higher morality.

The higher morality, which wipes out the distinction between being and existence, is actualized through the operation of the Divine Love. "In this love Being and Existence, God and

1. Hirsch, Die Idealistische Philosophie und das Christentum, p. 183. "Fichte hat keinen Raum mehr für den Gedanken des Schöpfers."

2. Fichte, op. cit., p. 114.

man, are one; wholly transfused and lost in each other." ¹
 Reflection could not be the uniting bond, because its essence is to divide itself into parts. Reflection must first transform itself into love of the Absolute in order to unify life. Love prevents the reason from going on to effect an infinite division of existence into forms. "The reflexion which has become Divine Love, and is therefore wholly overshadowed by God Himself --- is the starting point of Science." ²

Fichte had reached a conclusion which can only be regarded as a form of mysticism. He had come to disregard his earlier insistence that self-consciousness demands a division between subject and object, and that the moral struggle to overcome this division is unending. He now makes the end of the blessed life a mystic absorption of all that is individual into God. Reflective or determinate knowledge must annihilate itself. In God, all labour and effort vanishes, together with all hopes and fears.

The mystical issue of Fichte's thought is not surprising in view of his presupposition that nothing exists except for the Ego. The phenomenal world and the distinctions of self-consciousness have no real existence in themselves.

1. Ibid, p. 187.
 2. Ibid, p. 190.

The finite self therefore has nothing to oppose to the Absolute Ego; it is but a moment within the latter. The term 'pantheism' although applicable, is not a wholly satisfactory characterization of this system which refuses the attribute of reality to the manifold of existence. There is no real world to enter into an equation with God or to be identified with Him. Solipsism or acosmism would be more adequate as descriptive terms for Fichte's thought.

B. Schelling

F.W.J. Schelling (1775-1854) undertook to break through the closed system of the Fichtean Ego. He had begun his philosophical development as a disciple of Fichte but eventually became dissatisfied with Fichte's neglect of the external world. He came to believe that if there is to be knowledge there must be an external world to be known, a world which possesses independent reality alongside the Ego. On Schelling's view the Ego is not able to posit its own objective world: "Der Charakter des Ichs liegt eben darin, dass es kein anderes Prädicat hat als das des Selbstbewusstseyns." ¹ The Ego is therefore in no sense absolute, apart from the fact that it is absolute in the process of thinking. It does not possess absolute reality.

1. Schelling, System des transcendentalen Idealismus. Werke, I abth., III Bd., p. 368.

In any epistemology, knowledge depends upon the agreement of subject and object; but for an avowed idealist, as Schelling was, there must be an intelligible unity of subject and object. When Schelling granted independent reality to the objective world he rendered this unity less amenable to proof. He will not allow that the split between subject and object can be bridged by the principle of causality. This would imply the action of an unknowable transcendental thing-in-itself upon our consciousness, and such a concept is as repugnant to Schelling as to Fichte. Nor may the oneness of subject and object in the knowing process be dogmatically affirmed. Schelling thought that it was the weakness of the Fichtean philosophy to have been a dogmatic idealism. There the reality of the limit between subject and object was simply denied in dogmatic fashion.

Schelling believed that he had found the answer to the problem by showing that objective nature, as well as mind, is intelligible in its constitution. Quite apart from the experience of our self-consciousness in the knowing process, in which we relate the object to ourselves, it remains true that the subject and object are one. Intelligence can discover itself in nature as well as in the Ego. Nature and mind are two poles of the same truth. Every common plant is a symbol of intelligence. The goal of all natural progress is to rise to the manifestation of spirit and to reach its climax in man.

Schelling is therefore able to speak of 'speculative' physics as a complementary science to transcendental idealism. "Die vollendete Theorie der Natur würde diejenige seyn, kraft welcher die ganze Natur sich in eine Intelligenz auflöste."¹ It was this view of nature which especially commended Schelling's philosophy to the Romanticists.

Schelling unfolds three departments of the transcendental philosophy, representing the stages of self-consciousness by which we become aware of the objective world. The first is theoretic philosophy, in which we examine, psychologically, the progress of intelligence in the ego through the channels of sensation, perception and reflection. A second and higher department of philosophy is the practical stage of self-consciousness at which we relate ourselves to the objective world, and the will realizes itself in moral action. The third and highest stage of self-consciousness is art. In the activity of the artistic genius, reason reaches a higher realization than either the theoretic or the practical stage could achieve.

Reason and will can bring only a part of man to the highest attainment, but art elevates the whole of man to the highest by effecting a union of his conscious and unconscious

1. Ibid, p. 341.

nature. In the objective world of organic nature we observe a perfect fusion of unconscious mechanistic striving with teleological development.¹ In the subjective intelligence the counterpart to this union of the unconscious and the teleological is art. The genuine artist, although he may consciously employ various techniques in the production of his work, is nevertheless held under the sway of his unconscious genius.² Art, in its various forms, comprehends the true organon of philosophy.

That to which the union of the conscious and the unconscious in art witnesses is the existence of an Absolute Reason in which both unconscious teleological nature and conscious mind are one. Although we cannot discover the Absolute, either in individual minds or in particulars of the objective world, the comprehensive vision of the philosopher is able to recognize traces of the Absolute in the broad stretch of history. "Die Geschichte als Ganzes ist eine fortgehende, allmählich sich enthüllende Offenbarung des Absoluten."³ The first time in history that the Absolute, or God, became conscious was in Jesus Christ. The Incarnation,

1. Ibid, p. 610. "Die Natur in ihrer blinden und mechanischen Zweckmässigkeit representirt mir allerdings eine ursprüngliche Identität der bewussten und der bewusstlosen Thätigkeit.

2. Ibid, p. 619. "Das Kunstwerk reflektirt uns die Identität der bewussten und der bewusstlosen Thätigkeit."

3. Ibid, p. 603.

however, is not to be regarded as a mere fact in time but as an eternal act of the Absolute. ¹

Schelling therefore does not have a truly objective, independent God.² His Absolute is without precise objective determinateness because it is the 'identity' or absolute 'indifference-point' standing between both subject and object. He was driven to this conclusion by the presuppositions of his system, viz., that the objective world cannot be subsumed under the Ego, but that the objective world is nevertheless on the same plane of intelligible reality as the mind. The ultimate unity of subject and object had therefore to be projected entirely outside the realm of both consciousness and of nature, to a sphere which Hegel characterized as 'the night in which all cows are black'. The mode of relating the self to this Absolute is expressed by Schelling in mystical terms:

Die Ideen, die Geister mussten von ihrem Centre abfallen, sich in der Natur, der allgemeinen Sphäre des Abfalls, in der Besonderheit einführen, damit sie nachher, als besondere, in die Indifferenz zurückkehren und, ihr versöhnt.³

1. Watson, Schelling's Transcendental Idealism, p. 180. "God is not a personal or purely objective being, but the gradual revelation of the divine in man."

2. Hirsch, Geschichte der neuern protestantische Theologie, IV, p. 419. "Wird von Schelling.....das Sein und Leben Gottes in allem, was da ist und lebt, durchaus pantheistisch ausgedeutet."

3. Schelling, Philosophie und Religion, p. 64.

In his later period, following 1804, Schelling went on to develop a view of God which granted to Him a more elevated and independent existence. He had come to recognize the inadequacy of his pantheistic tendencies. It was at the point at which he developed his system of identity, however, that he attained his most influential position. It was at this point that Hegel took up the thread of speculation.

C. Hegel

G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1830) brought to its most thoroughgoing expression the idealist philosophy which had been in a process of development in Kant, Fichte and Schelling. Kant had left self-consciousness and the object of knowledge to stand as two unreconciled elements in the knowing process. Fichte brought the two sides together at the expense of suppressing one of them, while Schelling suppressed both. Hegel sought to unite the two sides by holding them together in a higher synthesis.

Hegel ridiculed the Absolute of Schelling on the grounds that it was the mere assertion of an absolute without any attempt being made to show by what means it was derived or of what it consisted. Hegel would show that the Absolute is a unity of mind in which all distinctions of subject and object, spirit and nature, are comprehended and reconciled. What have popularly been regarded as opposites must be shown to be the

necessary elements of reason. Thus for him, the Absolute is not a nondescript point of indifference, but the unity of consciousness in which all things are explained and have their being.

Hegel did not propose his system of absolute idealism dogmatically, but he attempted to show the course of development by which spirit comes to be aware of itself as absolute. This course of development, traced from sense perception to universal self-consciousness, is what he designates 'the phenomenology of mind', the title of his first major work. The movement of mind as it gathers up all possible varieties and stages of experience is not an 'abstract' process of thought; its movement towards achieving an organon of total reality is the very negation of abstraction. The abstract is that being which is cut off from the total system of rationality. The rational is that which is real, and the real is the rational.

Hegel insists upon the concrete historical character of mind. This use of the term 'concrete' differs from the popular conception, which applies the term to dead self-existent matter in isolation from thought.

Hegel claimed to have been led to his philosophical position by experience rather than by a priori reasoning. Experience is just as necessary for an understanding of the Absolute, as the Absolute is necessary for an interpretation

of experience. In Hegel's terms, 'experience' had a broader connotation than for Kant who restricted it to sense experience. Hegel made the term experience stand for every conscious relation involving subject and object, i.e., all determinate consciousness. There can therefore be nothing outside of experience to transcend it, no thing-in-itself to stand in a causal relation to experience. There can be no false experience, because a false relation of subject and object would be better described as meaningless or as a contradiction in terms. ¹ In this absolutism of mind,

All the dualities, all the fissures, all the hiatus, and so to speak, all the rents and wounds with which reality shows itself to be lacerated by the abstract intellect, are filled, closed and healed. ²

We cannot here enter into a detailed exposition of Hegel's massive and difficult thought; but a brief outline of his general method will assist us to evaluate the results in which his thought issued. Hegel appropriated the Fichtean dialectical method, applying it in a vastly more comprehensive manner than his predecessor. In Hegel's philosophy it was not used to effect a resolution of opposites, but to include all opposites within a total organon of thought and reality. Fichte had referred back to the Ego at each stage of the

1. Hegel, The Phenomenology of Mind. p. xxviii (translator's introduction).

2. Croce, The Philosophy of Hegel, p. 52.

dialectical process; but Hegel develops each stage out of a union of two opposing lower stages until the Absolute with its harmony of all opposites is reached. The universe is a process; it is the evolution of the Absolute or manifestation of God.

The key to Hegel's thought lies primarily in the Logic. Logic, for him, was not bare abstraction but the morphology of concrete thought, the form of experience. It describes the evolution of the Notion from the bare statement of Being up to absolute self-consciousness, in which all of the real is comprehended. Consequently, the application of the Logic to the interpretation of nature and to the specialized pursuits of mind was merely an amplification of a system of reality already implicitly developed in the Logic itself. The Kantian epistemology had dealt first with the bare conditions rendering knowledge possible, and the Categories were abstract forms. The content of thought was transcendent to the form of thought. Hegel's epistemology, on the contrary, is thoroughly immanent; form and content are one.¹ The conditions of thought are not to be abstracted from the experience which gives them content.

1. Hegel, Die Logik, Encyclopädie I, p. 212. "In der Philosophie kommt es indess nicht darauf an, dass man sich etwas denken kann, sondern darauf, dass man wirklich denkt und das wahrhafte Element des Gedankens ist nicht in willkürlich gewählten Symbolen, sondern nur im Denken selbst zu suchen."

The rational is the real. The Logic will show that all divisions of philosophy are but determinations of the Idea. The whole is a circle of circles in which all philosophy and all science are but moments. When Logic describes the evolution of mind coming to absolute self-consciousness, it is, by the same token, asserting that this supreme self-consciousness is absolute reality as well. Metaphysics falls within logic.

The Logic itself has the familiar triadic form, consisting of the divisions of Being, Essence, and Concept. Being (Sein) is the Notion (Begriff) in itself, the bare statement that something is. This pure Being is the absolute indifference or identity, without determinations. It is the point at which Schelling's philosophy had ended. For Hegel, it is the beginning. Pure Being is a meaningless abstraction as it stands by itself; and because of this abstractness it can be equated with the negative or Nothingness. But the negative can be stated only in so far as it itself possesses Being. So, Being and Nothing pass over into one another and can only be described in a relation of one to the other. The unity of Being and Nothing is Becoming. ¹

1. Ibid, pp. 169-171. "Dieses reine Seyn ist nun die reine Abstraktion, damit das absolute-negative, welches gleichfalls unmittelbar genommen, das Nichts ist..... Das Nichts ist als dieses unmittelbare, sich selbstgleiche, ebenso umgekehrt dasselbe, was das Seyn ist. Die Wahrheit des Seyns so wie des Nichts ist daher die Einheit beider; diese Einheit ist das Werden."

Becoming has its own contradiction or opposite with which it likewise unites to achieve a higher unity. This dialectical process, continuing ad infinitum, constitutes existence (Dasein), i.e., Being with determinations. Non-Being, then, is not the difficult problem for Hegel that the non-Ego was for Fichte, or the objective world for Schelling. The negative is seen to be necessary for meaningful experience. "Die Grundlage aller Bestimmtheit ist die Negation." ¹ Non-Being is nothing foreign to Being. ²

The division of the Logic which deals with Essence is specifically concerned with the nature of existence. Essence is the measure which remains constant throughout changes in existence. It is the ground of various properties of things; but it is not a transcendent ground. We know Essences only as they appear in existing things: "Das Wesen es ist, welches existirt, ist die Existenz Erscheinung." ³ The sphere of Essence is the external world in which the Notion has extended itself. It is the sphere of scientific investigation and reflection.

1. Ibid., p. 180.

2. Ibid., p. 181. "Im Daseyn ist die Bestimmtheit eins mit dem Seyn, welche zugleich als Negation gesetzt, Gränze, Shränke ist. Daher ist das Andersseyn nicht ein gleichgültiges ausser ihm, sondern sein eigenes Moment."

3. Ibid., p. 260.

The objective world with which science deals appears to the popular mind to constitute a permanent reality. The philosophic mind, however, recognizes that external things are only Essences or appearances. Matter, which seems to comprise the basis of independent things, is an abstraction. Mere matter, like the thing-in-itself, is unknowable. In place of abstract transcendent matter Hegel has only appearances:

Das Innere oder das übersinnliche Jenseits ist aber entstanden, es kommt aus der Erscheinung her, und sie ist seine Vermittlung; oder die Erscheinung ist sein Wesen, und in der That seine Erfüllung. ¹

Essence passes over into other higher syntheses which we cannot detail here, but it is worthy of note that the final synthesis in this division of the Logic is designated as 'Reciprocity'. It is a term which connotes equation and reconciliation. The last word describing the progress of the Notion from simple being through its externalization in a world is a term of reconciliation. It is still a mental category; mind asserts its sovereignty to the very end of Hegel's discussion of the external world. He remains true to his principle of the inter-connectedness of all reality in terms of mental activity.

In the final division of the Logic, that of the

1. Phänomenologie des Geistes, p. 111.

Concept (Begriff), Being and Essence are conceptually united. Consciousness and reality become one. The final synthesis in this division is effected by the Idea (Idee). This final stage of logic at which thought and being become united in the Absolute Idea, spells the end of the old metaphysics as a separate enquiry. ¹ It is not now necessary to search after an objective truth transcendent to mind. The Absolute Mind or Idea is legislative with regard to the objects of knowledge because it subsumes all truth within itself:

Die Idee ist die Wahrheit; denn die Wahrheit ist diess, dass die Objektivität dem Begriffe entspricht, --- nicht dass äusserliche Dinge meinen Vorstellungen entsprechen; diess sind nur richtige Vorstellungen, die Ich Dieser habe." ²

Hegel stands alongside of Anselm and Descartes in conceding ontological status to thought.

The Absolute Idea is the Subject-Object which unites the ideal and the real, the finite and the infinite, soul and body. It is universal rather than individual, psychologically conceived mind; but it includes all individual minds as moments of itself. It is the one universal substance. ³ Because the

1. Wallace, Prolegomena to the Study of Hegel's Philosophy, p. 458. "Metaphysics has no higher category than actuality: transcendental logic shows that actuality rests on the Idea. -- reality conceived and conception realised."

2. Die Logik, p. 385.

3. Ibid, p. 388.

Absolute is comprehensive of life, the old Kantian distinction between theoretical and practical reason is done away:

Die absolute Idee ist zunächst die Einheit der theoretischen und der praktischen Idee und damit zugleich die Einheit der Idee des Lebens und des Erkennens. ¹

We are now in a position to comprehend what Hegel would have us believe concerning God and His relation to the world of experience when he makes the statement: "Gott ist die Wahrheit." ² God is simply to be equated with the Absolute Idea or Spirit. He is the most real Being in Whom all finite things receive their truth and being. ³ God does not stand over against subjective beings as an Absolute Object, but he takes up subjectivity as an essential moment of Himself.

When Hegel says that God is the absolute Substance and only true reality, we are not to understand from this that he wishes to subscribe to the crassest form of pantheism. He thinks of the term pantheism as signifying that the totality of things in their abstract individuality and contingency is God. He prefers to think of God as the Universal, elevated above individual forms. He believes that "Pantheism is a bad expression, because it is possible to misunderstand it so that

1. Ibid, p. 408.

2. Ibid, p. 30.

3. Ibid, p. 162. "Gott, der die Wahrheit ist, in dieser seiner Wahrheit, d.h. als absoluter Geist, nur insofern von uns erkannt wird, als wir zugleich die von ihm erschaffene Welt, die Natur und den endlichen Geist, in ihrem Unterschied von Gott, als unwahr anerkennen."

(Παν) is taken in the sense of allness or totality, not as universality." ¹ The substantiality of God is not that of a dead ground underlying individual forms. The truth is rather that He is a living Universal within Whom all differences are enclosed and preserved. In the presence of the One, all individual finite things disappear.

It is in those undeveloped religions where God is conceived as absolute power that pantheistic notions are to be found. Such beliefs are usually allied to the thought of God as substance:

Substance is not conceived of as the active agent within itself, as subject and as activity in accordance with ends; not as wisdom but only as power..... Such is the system which is called Pantheism." ²

On the view which holds that God is absolute power there is no provision for strife or opposition within a system. The Absolute, on the other hand, is safeguarded against pantheism by its internal movement from thesis to antithesis, to synthesis. The initial movement of the Logic which showed the antithesis of Being and Nothing, avoided the development of a system of identity, which is the essence of pantheism.

The pantheistic concept of God which equates Him with abstract substance and accidents is capable only of

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1. Philosophy of Religion, II, p. 52.
 2. Ibid, I, p. 331.

dogmatic affirmation by means of an extraneous notion of identity. But the concept of God as a living Universal requires no dogmatic assertion or mediating notion. In the Universal, subject and predicate are one and the same because the Universal is inclusive of all truth.¹ There need therefore be no propositional affirmations made concerning the existence of God or His nature. God as the Universal is the totality of His self-differentiation, i.e., the totality of all differentiation or all truth.

In view of the evolutionary character of Hegel's system it may appear surprising that he rejected the teleological argument for the existence of God. He characterizes it as the conception of power working toward ends, a conception germane to living nature but not adequate to Spirit.² God is to be known through pure speculative knowledge rather than through a mediating inference based on the observation of nature.³ To learn to know God we do not have to look for an objective Being Who is a permanent Other to ourselves, but we

1. Ibid, II, p. 139.

2. Ibid, II, p. 162.

3. Phänomenologie des Geistes, p. 571. "Gott ist allein im reinen spekulativen Wissen erreichbar und ist nur in ihm und ist nur es selbst, denn er ist der Geist und dieses spekulativen Wissen ist das Wissen der offenbaren Religion."

must promote the proper unity of our self-conscious subectivity with the Absolute Idea.¹ An objective God belongs to the lower stage of natural religion in which God is identified with some part of nature instead of being conceived as the Universal. An adequate religion seeks to promote the unity of finite mind with Infinite Mind because the truth of religion is that the Divine and human natures are one.² Philosophy and theology must be regarded as one study, as they were in the Middle Ages.

Hegel regards Christianity as the absolute religion because it represents in pictorial fashion the philosophy of the Absolute, rendering it comprehensible to the popular mind. The doctrine of the Trinity represents the evolution of the Absolute. God, as absolute Being, goes out of Himself in self-diremption in the person of the Son, Who represents God's externalization in the world. God returns to Himself again as Absolute Spirit ---the Holy Spirit.³ The Holy Spirit is actually the supreme member of the Trinity, presupposed at the beginning as well as realized at the end of the Divine movement.

1. Philosophy of Religion, II, p. 330.

2. Ibid, II, p. 349. "Since we call the Absolute Notion the divine nature, the idea of Spirit means the unity of divine and human nature."

3. Ibid, III, p. 25. Cf. Phänomenologie des Geistes, p. 402.

In the Incarnation, God has symbolized the truth that the sphere of finite nature and history is Divine.¹ Christ is not the sole incarnation of God, but all of nature and history is Divine. Christ merely illustrated the implicit unity of the Divine and human natures. The expression 'God-man' means that "There is only one reason, one Spirit, that Spirit as finite has no true existence."² This was a truth which had to be shown in a temporal manifestation, in one particular man; but the most comprehensive form in which the Divine is actualized in the world is in the organization of the State. God did not create a world and afterward become incarnate within it; the world has its Divine character because it belonged to its very nature from the beginning to be subsumed under the Absolute.³ The death of Christ shows that the finite is but a moment in the Divine; the separateness of the finite is something to be overcome because its true nature is Divine.

Hegel's system of the Absolute excludes all external relations. Discordances which appear to negate the harmony of

1. Croce, op. cit., p. 70. "The sacred character, assumed by history, is an aspect of the character of immanence, proper to Hegelian thought, to his negation of all transcendence."

2. Philosophy of Religion, III, p. 73.

3. McTaggart, Studies in Hegelian Cosmology, p. 218. "To say that God is incarnate in the finite is misleading. We should rather say that the finite is the incarnation of God."

the Absolute are merely temporary abstractions from the whole. Evil has no independent reality. It is "the most sublime reality, that evil is non-existent, and that man is not to allow this distinction, this nullity, any valid existence." ¹ Sin is not a fearful reality which does not belong to the harmonious system of the Absolute; it is a necessary element in moral experience which must be transcended in the triadic process whereby the opposition of sin to innocence is resolved in virtue. Man does not become aware of sin through confrontation by a Holy God who stands over against him as an Other. If sin is regarded as an independent fact of human existence, it is non-rational and therefor unreal. On Hegel's terms, however, the reality conferred upon sin is that which it possesses in its role as a moment within the good; and thereby it loses all seriousness.

This brief reference to the application of Hegel's method to the subject of evil and sin illustrates most clearly the rigidly immanent character of his thought. In Hegel's account of religion, the Christian faith loses its disjunctive relations between Creator-creation, sin-grace, penitence-Divine forgiveness, --- the themes with which the Biblical revelation is fundamentally concerned. They become elementary oppositions

1. Philosophy of Religion, I, p. 99.

within a dialectic which ends in a rational harmony. It is true that these major Biblical themes represent estrangement from God and a return to Him in reconciliation. In the Bible, however, this is not a necessary movement of thought; it is the account of wilful acts of human disobedience and spontaneous acts of Divine grace. There is, in fact, a conflict between human methods of effecting reconciliation and the Divine means of reconciliation, culminating in the opposition at the Cross of Christ.

In the Bible, the reconciliation of man and God does not involve wiping out the disparateness between the human and the Divine. St. Paul, as a reconciled believer, mourned at the continuing conflict in his life between the flesh and the spirit. Even the Eschatology of the Apocalypse leaves us still with a picture of God supreme in majesty above all the hosts of heaven.

It may be true, as Haldane suggests, that Hegel did not presume to offer a thorough-going explication of the Absolute up to its last movement of synthesis, but proposed it only as

An ideal to be worked towards but not to be regarded as capable of demonstration excepting in abstract terms which were therefore, ¹insufficient for the concrete ideas of human beings.

1. Hegel, Science of Logic, p. 8. (Introductory Preface by Viscount Haldane).

If Hegel did indeed conceive of the Absolute in such a manner, he was betraying his basic assumption that the ideal or the conceptual is the real. But regardless of whether or not Hegel believed that the Absolute could be reached in human thought and experience, the Absolute was pre-supposed at every stage of his system. At every stage of his representation of concrete human thought, he finds a synthesis: "Opposition thought is opposition overcome." ¹

If a harmony is attained at each and every point to which mind is capable of rising, it matters little that the process may be incomplete. Hegelian teleology may leave the door open for movement in unexpected directions, so that a conclusive judgment about the system may be premature at any given time. Yet, if his presuppositions and method are accepted, we can be certain that his teleology will be quite removed from Christian eschatology. Whether the Absolute of Hegel be realized or idealized, it is not the personal God of Christian faith who is creatively prior to nature and human experience. Hegel's Absolute is universal mind, the unity of a community of individuals, which comes to complete consciousness only in their totality. God is not real before He is actualized in the totality of finite minds. There is no sphere for the Divine

1. Croce, op. cit., p. 31.

transcendence, unless God be conceived as a transcendent Ideal. And, as we have pointed out, the concept of abstract ideal truth is out of keeping with Hegel's basic assumptions.

Hegel's system is more amenable to the charge of pantheism than that of Fichte, in view of the fact that Hegel at least has a cosmic structure in which objects exist in independence of the finite subjective consciousness. He has a world which can be related, after some fashion, to God. It is not difficult to state the relation. The world, for Hegel, has reality only as it admits of rationality; and rationality demands an Absolute. It is impossible therefore to avoid the conclusion that Hegel believed that all which is real subsists in God. It was only a false pantheism which he inveighed against; i.e., one which rested upon a theory of knowledge which he regarded as inadequate.

On Hegel's view, individuals gain reality by being dialectically subsumed under the Universal, rather than by abstract identification with God. It might therefore be more adequate to characterize his system as a 'panentheism'. There is no reality outside the Universal or God; but God is greater than the individuals or sum of individuals which have their reality in Him. The term 'panentheism' would seem to be more applicable than the term 'pantheism' to a system which ends in a synthesis rather than in a simple identification of antitheses.

CHAPTER IV.

THE THEOLOGY OF IDEALISM

A. Baur

Ferdinand Christian Baur, the founder of the so-called Tubingen School, associated with the centre where he taught 1826-60, carried the Hegelian philosophy into the field of critical theological studies. His particular contribution lay in the study of Church History; and Pfleiderer has termed his work the most important in the century.¹ Baur construed history, after the Hegelian pattern, as the outworking of the Idea. He believed that in the study of history consciousness contemplates itself. In his earlier writings Baur applied this method of historical research to the New Testament literature, an approach which was followed and extended to radical conclusions by his disciple, D. F. Strauss.

Baur believed in the existence of a generalized Divine presence in the world, a point of view which enabled him to discover a preparation for Christianity within ancient philosophy. The principle of the God-man, which has been regarded as the distinctive element in Christianity, is actually

1. Pfleiderer, The Development of Theology, p. 284.

bound up with the universal essence of religion. In both Greek religion and philosophy is to be found the ideal of a union of the human and the Divine. ¹ In Platonism as in Christianity the goal of life and of history is a divine sanctification of men. There is a striking similarity between Plato's Republic and the Biblical idea of the Kingdom of God. In general terms, the relation between Platonism and Christianity is that of the difference between idea and realization or doctrine and life, with Christianity occupying the role of fulfilment. ² The inner laws of human nature had undergone a progressive development such that the point was inevitably reached where they came to historical truth in Christianity. ³

This attempt to relate Christianity positively to other religions and to philosophical thought gained momentum throughout the nineteenth century. Later studies of comparative religion proved to be more empirical in outlook, but Baur's method of seeking similarities among religions had a profound influence. For Baur, the discovery of similarities

1. Baur, Drei Abhandlungen zur Geschichte der alten Philosophie, p. 161.

2. Ibid, p. 238.

3. Baur, Paulus der Apostel Jesu Christi, ^{2te Theil} p. 232. "Das Verhältniss des Christenthums zum Heidenthum und Judenthum kann ~~nur~~ als das der absoluten Religion zu den ihr vorangehenden untergeordneten Formen der Religion bestimmt werden."

was gratifying from the point of view of his philosophical presuppositions. He welcomed the manifestation of close relationships between Christianity and pagan thought and religion, as evidence for the absoluteness and comprehensiveness of the Idea. The Hegelian view of history refused to come to terms with particularity and uniqueness in historical appearance.

Coming more directly to Baur's Christian viewpoint we find that he regarded the principle of subjective freedom as a distinguishing feature of Christian consciousness. This is no arbitrary freedom but it consists in a unity of the subjective with the objective. The individual knows himself to be at one with the universal, in the unity of the Whole of which he is a member. In his belongingness to the Whole he experiences inner freedom. Subjective freedom, or salvation, rests upon the fact that there is a bond of identity between the Divine and the human:

Die Möglichkeit der Erlösung beruht auf dem unzertrennlichen Bande der Identität des Göttlichen und Menschlichen, darauf dass der Mensch an sich mit Gott Eins ist. ¹

The authority of Jesus Christ in Christianity lies in the fact that He imparts the Spirit (Geist) to the Church, which is thereby exalted into the absolute essence of God. ²

1. Drei Abhandlungen, p. 274.
2. Ibid, p. 301.

In Christ Himself the Divine and the human, the pattern and the historical, are united in the most perfect union of essence. The authority which Christ confers upon the Church is not that of some external, alien power, but it is an authority which is consonant with the absolute authority of reason. Only so can Christianity be the absolute religion.¹

In his important work, Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi, Baur represented the manner in which he believed the Christian life is realized. Of all men converted to Christianity he was convinced that in no one did the Christian principle assert its absolute superiority as clearly as in St. Paul.

With the thought of St. Paul a new principle was introduced into Christianity. The events of the life, death and resurrection of Christ came to take on an absolute meaning, as being constitutive of the Christian principle, rather than to be but stories about the founder of a religion.² The Christian principle is capable of leading a man upward to the point of union with God, and, in this reconciliation, man is inspired with the Absolute. In the consciousness of the Absolute he becomes superior to everything fleeting, worldly

1. Ibid, p. 315.

2. Paulus, p. 136. "Die absolute Bedeutung, welche die Person Christi für den Apostel hat, ist die Absolutheit des Christlichen Principis selbst."

and finite. The Christian principle leads one to an awareness of the essential distinction between Spirit and flesh and promotes man's freedom from all that has a merely external relation to him.

It was preeminently the death of Christ which enabled the Christian principle to become universalized. The messianic idea of Judaism with all its sensual elements was thereby disillusioned and stripped away. The essential feature of Christ's person which remained to inform the Church's faith was the conviction that He had the Spirit (Geist) within Himself. The blessedness of an individual no longer depended upon anything material and outward but was conditional upon a sense of immediate communion with Christ, whereby he might achieve oneness with God. The Christian man conceived himself, in his consciousness of Christ, to be identical with the Spirit of God. ¹

The testimony of the Spirit with our spirits, which St. Paul represents as the evidence of genuine faith, is the highest expression of the identity of our subjective spirits with spirit-in-itself, or Absolute Spirit. This experience is characterized by a sense of absolute freedom, a freedom from finite limitations. The Christian's world-view will be quite

1. Ibid, p. 139.

different from that of other men because he is able to make observations from the standpoint of absolute consciousness. His consciousness is at once a community consciousness embracing all believers. The community has its oneness in the fact that "Christus das Princip dieser Gemeinschaft ist." ¹

The significance of external history for Baur is evident when he says concerning the details of the conversion experience of St. Paul:

Die innere Erscheinung musste auf irgend eine Weise auch eine äussere werden, wenn sie für die Tradition ihre volle Bedeutung und ihre concrete Wahrheit haben sollte. ²

History is not contingent, positive or unique but it is that manifestation of the Idea, which is serviceable for its perpetuation and propagation. The movement from Gospel history to the history of the Apostolic period was a necessary movement toward the practical realization of the Christian Idea.

In formal terms Baur outlines his approach to the history of dogma. The historian in the field of dogma must trace an immanent development of dogma, in which every moment of thought is the necessary presupposition of the next. ³

1. Ibid, p. 184.

2. Ibid, p. 79

3. Baur, Lehrbuch der christlichen Dogmengeschichte, p. 9. "Jede neue Gestaltung des Dogma's ist sowohl ein neues Moment, durch welches das Dogma in der immanenten Bewegung seines Begriffs sich selbst bestimmt."

The entire course of the history of dogma is the progression of the distinctively Christian consciousness. Changes in dogma are new positions which subjectivity takes up toward objective dogma. These changes are to be accepted as valid because the subjective and the objective are actually but two sides of the selfsame spirit.

Die Aufgabe der wahrhaft geschichtlichen Behandlung kann daher nur seyn, in allen geschichtlichen Erscheinungen die Einheit eines und desselben Begriffs, und in jeder bedeutenden Epoche machenden Veränderung nicht bloss etwas Zufälliges und Willkürliches, Isolirtes und Unmotivirtes, sondern eine aus dem Wesen der Sache selbst hervorgegangene und durch sie bedingte Bewegung zu erkennen. ¹

On this view, heresy is virtually an impossibility. All human thought upon the subject of Christian doctrine is constantly the expression of the Absolute Spirit.

Baur applies his method to the field of early Christian history. ² The period of Christian history which conforms to the first term of the familiar Hegelian dialectical triad is that earliest period of the nascent Church when Christianity was confined within the narrow limits of Jewish particularism. The second period, in opposition to this

1. Ibid., p. 19.

2. Baur, The Church History of the First Three Centuries, II, p. 127. "Looking at the various sides of the historical appearance of Christianity we see that it develops and realises on a constantly increasing scale the absolute idea which is its essential contents."

restrictive tendency, was the period of the mission to the Gentiles when Christianity became universalized. With universalism, however, there was a constant danger of secularization. The meeting and conflict with the Gentile mind precipitated the synthetic development of the Catholic Church, in which the specific contents and character of Christianity were preserved while making use of the thought forms of secular philosophy.

In a broader outline of the history of dogma he applies the same immanent dialectical formula. The period comprehended by the history of the old Catholic Church is characterized as the period of the production of dogma, the objectification of the Christian consciousness. In the scholastic period of the Middle Ages, objective dogma regressed into subjectivism, owing to the reflective preoccupation of the times. In the period since the Reformation both the objective and subjective factors of Christian dogma have been given their due, while at the same time they have been transcended within a more adequate viewpoint, viz., absolute consciousness. ¹

The method of Baur shows the implications for historical study of a thorough-going immanent idealism. His principles removed uniqueness from the historical content of

1. Lehrbuch, p. 13.

both Gospel history and Christian history, as contrasted with general history. It is not the historic fact which determines the content of Christian doctrine and the course of Christian history, but the historic fact is the necessary outworking of the Idea.

Like his master, Hegel, Baur has no realm of transcendence which stands in contrast with the world and human life. There are no Divine acts which are arbitrary or novel. With his rejection of the uniqueness of the historical facts underlying Christian belief, Baur made a vital attack upon the distinction between the human and the Divine in Christianity. When history is viewed as incidental to the progress of absolute consciousness, there is no element in Christian faith which is outside the control of consciousness. The latter is compellingly normative for belief and action. Traditionally, the historical sources of faith had been regarded as the issue of a transcendental Divine fiat. With Baur they are but the necessary element in a process which is determined wholly from within. There is no revelatory history, but all historical facts are pliable to the self-determining Idea.

B. Strauss

David Friedrich Strauss (1808-74) shared with his teacher, Baur, a grounding in Hegelian philosophy. From this basis he made his important contribution to the study of the historical origins of the Christian faith. His Leben Jesu, published in 1835, was the most radical historical criticism of New Testament sources which hitherto had been attempted. Although he used many of the techniques of modern empirical historical research, one cannot fail to discern clear traces of his rationalistic idealism.

His philosophical presuppositions may be found in his Glaubenslehre, published shortly after his first Leben Jesu. It is the view of Strauss that theological knowledge is not a knowledge which relates immediately to the objective essence of things. It is primarily concerned with inner feeling and its determinations in relation to the Absolute.¹ Philosophy exercises priority over religion in that it determines the form which religion takes. Philosophy adopts a theoretical attitude toward life while theology takes up a practical attitude. Strauss indicates, however, that an adequate theology should recognize the supremacy of philosophy,

1. Strauss, Die christlichen Glaubenslehre, I, p. 8.

because life is rationally ordered. Failure to recognize the supremacy of philosophy leaves one bound to a belief in a revelation pointing to objects which are external in consciousness. "Wer zum Vernunftglauben noch nicht reif ist, der bleibt bei'm Offenbarungsglauben." ¹ It is the learned rational mind alone which is capable of perceiving the movement of Spirit in historical process. Only for those who are filled with the Spirit does externalized nature return to itself in consciousness. Whether the Absolute is regarded as a transcendent God or as an immanent Spirit depends upon the degree of intellectual acumen of the knower. ²

The first expression of the Absolute in the world is constituted by matter. In upward stages, it is further realized as life in nature and as mind in man. In the course of human history the Idea comes most fully to itself. Man is able to recognize the movement of the Idea, or God, in nature and in his own history, because the idea of God is already the native endowment of his mind. The tendency to personify God must be resisted, for God is All-personality. He is continually personifying Himself into infinite time. The Absolute is essentially result. When Strauss has carried through his examination of

1. Ibid, I, p. 355.

2. Ibid, I, p. 359f. "Dieser absolute Inhalt, wie er nach wissenschaftlicher Ansicht als ein in der Welt immanenter ihre innerste bewegende Seele ist: so ist er in der nichtwissenschaftlichen, wo er über die weltliche Wirklichkeit hinausfällt, auf diese als ein Anderes nur bezogen."

the process of the divine Idea he concludes that there is no room left for a transcendent sphere:

Das Jenseits ist zwar in allen der Eine, in seiner Gestalt als zukünftiges aber der letzte Feind, welchen die speculative Kritik zu bekämpfen und wo möglich zu überwinden hat. ¹

At the close of a section in which he had dealt with the history of Christian apologetics, Strauss makes the concluding assertion that his discussion has set forth the basic concepts of Christian doctrine, or to use other terms, these concepts have returned to the mind (Geist) from which they issued. "Das Begreifen ihres Hervorgangs aus dem Geiste ist ihr Ruckgang in demselben." ² Dogmatics therefore has no capital of its own and has no abiding reality. The process of the history of dogma is its destruction. ³ The peculiar and distinctive elements of the history of dogma are resolved again into absolute Mind.

In Strauss's study of the life of Christ we observe his principles at work in his most influential writing. He resolves a major part of the historical narrative and miraculous incidents of the New Testament into myth. ⁴

1. Ibid, II, p. 739.

2. Ibid, I, p. 353.

3. Pfleiderer, The Development of Theology, p. 133.

4. Strauss, Das Leben Jesu für das deutsche Volk, p. 159. "Jede unhistorische Erzählung, wie auch immer entstanden, in welcher eine religiöse Gemeinschaft einen Bestandtheil ihres heiligen Grundlage, weil einen absolute Ausdruck ihrer constitutiven Empfindungen und Vorstellungen erkennt, ist ein Mythos."

He believes that the Hebrew people never held a clear conception of history because they failed to comprehend the indissolubility of finite causes. Myth served to give expression to a certain idea of the Divine Being which they, in their human interests, desired to hold. In the history recorded in the Gospels it is virtually impossible to trace a line of demarcation between history and myth.

This is not a situation to be deprecated, however, because the use of myth is essentially necessary in the religious sphere:

If religion be defined as the perception of truth, not in the form of an idea, which is the philosophical 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 peculiar province, and that in the proper religious sphere it must necessarily exist.¹

Strauss was as opposed to a naturalistic interpretation of Gospel history as to an orthodox acceptance of it. The naturalistic interpretation overlooks the rational element which mythology enshrines. The religious myth is determined by the particular religious predispositions and aspirations of a people. The fact that the Hebrew and Christian religions are raised above their natural soil more than any other is evidence

1. Strauss, The Life of Jesus, (Eliot's translation), p. 80.

that a greater number of their myths are rooted in an idea universal to mankind.

The Old Testament ideas which had made the strongest religious appeal persisted on into the New Testament community. In the early days of that community, from the time of Jesus' death until the completion of the Gospel narratives, His devotees applied to their memory of Jesus' life and teaching, the Messianic myths of the Old Testament with which they had been long familiar. By the time the Gospels were actually written, it was difficult to distinguish between the expression of a fact and the ideas of His early partisans. When the basis of a New Testament recital is not acceptable to reason or conforms in a striking manner to late Jewish ideas concerning the Messiah, the whole story should be considered as non-historic. Jesus' own estimate of Himself as the Messiah must be regarded as merely the expression of His religious self-consciousness.

While some narratives may be coloured by wishful thinking, others may represent an 'enrichment' of the account of some unusual natural event. In all cases it must be decided whether a recorded event conforms to a reasonable form of history. Strauss persistently used an immanent rational principle to determine the line between the historical and the imaginative, rather than to employ a scientific,

empirical method of historical investigation.

Strauss made a tortuous attempt to prove the historical unreliability of practically every miraculous narrative in the New Testament, in his desire to resolve Christianity into a rational universalism immanent to consciousness. He admits that this radical criticism has destroyed the most valuable part of the beliefs which the Christian has treasured concerning Jesus, and has annihilated his animating motives; and therefore in a concluding section he strives to restore, dogmatically, what he has destroyed in his criticism.

This recovery, as might be expected, proves to be motivated by rational idealism rather than by the support of historical fact. He insists that theology must not be concerned to define a supernatural, metaphysical Christ, nor be disturbed if the historical picture of Jesus is uncertain. It is necessary only to present the general religious truths about Jesus which have been beclouded in the past by a dogmatic stress upon the uniqueness of historical events. He says,

Our age demands to be led in Christology to the idea in the fact, to the race in the individual: a theology which, in its doctrine on the Christ, stops short at him as an individual, is not properly a theology, but a homily. ¹

On this view, an adequate Christology must reveal to men that

1. Ibid, p. 781.

they are essentially Christs, that Jesus exemplified the divine possibilities of the race. It was a belief which informed much of nineteenth century thought concerning the significance of Jesus Christ. ¹

Strauss concedes that the modern critical theologian may be obliged to adhere to the popular traditional conceptions in his discourse to the Church. But he must use every opportunity available to present the 'spiritual' significance of all the traditional historical forms of the Gospel narrative, for that is the only truth which they possess. By a patient process of teaching he may be able to effect "the resolution of those forms into their original ideas in the consciousness of the Church also." ² The transition will then have been made from the external and historical to the inward and spiritual.

In his final work, Der Alte und der neue Glaube, Strauss presented in summary form his mature views on religious doctrine. In this work he moves far toward a radically materialistic doctrine, in contrast with his earlier idealism. He

1. Cf. Renan, The Life of Jesus, p. 310. "This sublime person, ---- we may call divine, not in the sense that Jesus has absorbed all the divine, or has been adequate to it, ---- but in the sense that Jesus is the one who has caused his fellow-men to make the greatest step towards the divine."

2. Op. cit., p. 783.

asks the question whether our modern sophistication permits us still to call ourselves Christians, and concludes that if we are honest with ourselves we must answer, "Wir sind keine Christen mehr." ¹

The strength of Christian teaching has been its doctrine of the resurrection, without which myth, the teaching of Jesus would have been long since forgotten. The resurrection myth illustrates a fundamental characteristic of religion, that of wish-fulfilment. He rejects the historicity of the resurrection in unqualified terms. ² It is this belief which has made Christianity hostile to a this-worldly culture. The wishes of men have led them to devise this and other transcendental doctrines. "Hätte der Mensch keine Wünsche, so hätte er auch keine Götter." ³ In this view he agrees with his contemporary, Feuerbach.

Strauss specifically rejects those elements of religion which seem to confer a supernatural significance upon life. He specially singles out the practise of baptism for rejection because it is a symbol with a supernatural reference.

1. Strauss, Der alte und der neue Glaube, p. 61.

2. Ibid, p. 47. "Historisch genommen, d.h. die ungeheuren Wirkungen dieses Glaubens mit seiner völligen Grundlosigkeit zusammen gehalten, lässt sich die Geschichte von der Auferstehung Jesu nur als ein welthistorischer Humbug bezeichnen."

3. Ibid, p. 90.

It is preferable that our children should be raised simply as human beings (Menschen).¹ He is willing, none the less, to retain one basic element of religion, the feeling of absolute dependence.² This feeling of dependency, however, is not experienced in the form of resignation toward a naked overwhelming power. The feeling is one of dependence upon order, law, reason and goodness which we feel to be related to our own innermost beings because of the ability which we have to perceive and personalize these elements.

The world is no longer to be regarded as the work of an absolute, rational and personal Being, but rather as the sphere (Werkstätte) in which the work of the rational and good forces of life takes place. The universe is both cause and effect, inner and outer, at one and the same time.³ It is a presumption for man to oppose himself as an 'other' to a transcendent Absolute to which he owes his being:

Es erscheint uns vermessen und ruchlos von Seiten eines einzelnen Menschenwesens, sich so keck dem All, aus dem es stammt, von dem es auch das bisschen Vernunft hat, dass es missbraucht, gegenüberzustellen.⁴

The Absolute must rather be conceived as realizing itself in and through man. To conceive of man as divine seems less a presumption to Strauss than to represent him as a separate individuality over against God.

1. Ibid, p. 60.

2. Ibid, p. 93.

3. Ibid, p. 94.

4. Ibid, p. 96f.

He regards the traditional antithesis between materialism and idealism as no more than a conflict over words. The conflict, so far as it has affected Christian theology, has resulted from the dualistic world-view which has dominated Christian history. Man has been arbitrarily divided into soul and body, and his existence into time and eternity; God has been set over against a passing and created world. Materialism and idealism should be interpreted as expressions of differing perspectives of reality rather than of fundamentally disjunctive systems of reality. The distinction between the two terms should therefore be done away:

Immer bleibt es dabei, dass wir nicht einen Theil der Functionen unsres Wesens einer physischen, einen andern einer geistigen Ursache zuzuschreiben haben, sondern alle einer und derselben, die sich entweder so oder so betrachtet lässt.¹

Strauss accepts Darwin's hypothesis with little qualification. Since Darwin, it is no longer necessary to postulate the existence of an external divine Architect to explain the design in nature. It has now been shown that natural forces and instincts effect the purposeful developments in nature. When we still speak of a world-goal we are speaking subjectively, and mean thereby that we believe we have an understanding

1. Ibid, p. 141.

of the general result of the interplay of forces at work in the world. ¹ The universe is eternal and progresses toward ever higher forms and functions. The idea of man developing from the ape should require no greater strain upon credulity than the belief in God becoming man, which devout men so faithfully accept. ²

The moral action of men does not consist in obedience to a divinely-given law but it is the self-determination of men according to the idea of the race. ³ If a man endeavours to realize the idea of the race in himself and to promote the same idea in others, he thereby relates himself religiously to the idea of the universe, the final source of all being and life.

The fundamental concept of religion is that there is no break in the continuity of nature and of life:

Es alles nach ewigen Gesetzen aus dem Einen Urquell
alles Lebens, aller Vernunft und alles Guten hervorgeht
-- das ist der Inbegriff der Religion. ⁴

The realm of human experience which best serves to illustrate the all-embracing harmony of the universe is that of art. The harmony which is not apparent in the conflicting forces of the world is imparted intuitively in artistic achievement and appreciation. ⁵

1. Ibid, p. 149.
2. Ibid, p. 135.
3. Ibid, p. 159.

4. Ibid, p. 161.
5. Ibid, p. 200.

Strauss did not proceed to a position of avowed atheism, but, practically, he ended in a thorough-going naturalistic position. He had placed God so completely within the context of unending natural processes that there was left to Him no sphere of distinctive operation. Strauss was not as concerned as the orthodox Hegelians to adapt the major themes of Christian doctrine to a dialectical scheme and to describe the whole as an organon of the Absolute. Reason, nevertheless, remains the supreme principle of his interpretation of life and reality, and assures the immanent and intimate character of his religious view. He says,

Unser Gott nimmt uns nicht von aussen in seinen Arm, aber er eröffnet uns Quellen des Trostes in unserem Innern. Er zeigt uns, dass zwar der Zufall ein unvernünftiger Weltherrscher wäre, dass aber die Nothwendigkeit, d.h. die Verkettung der Ursachen in der Welt, die Vernunft selber ist. ¹

Man remains, through control of his reason, in immediate relation with the Deity. Because Strauss believed that the Deity has relegated the operation of the universe to a process of natural development, it would seem, however, to be only an idealistic sentiment which caused him to retain the concept and terminology of theism.

It was Feuerbach, writing earlier than this final work of Strauss, who made the most complete inversion of the

1. Ibid, p. 252.

Hegelian idealism to a materialistic position. It is of interest to compare his thought briefly with that of Strauss. Feuerbach forewarns that his thought will be disturbing to minds that have been long perverted by superhuman religion and speculations. His philosophy generates thought from the opposite of thought - from matter and from the senses. Theology has been too long speculative and therefore dehumanizing. He describes religion as "the dream of the human mind." ¹

For Feuerbach the true theology is anthropology. The essence of religion is that it conceives of a human relation as being in fact a divine relation. Man is sufficient unto himself. His understanding and nature cannot extend beyond his range of vision or other perceptive powers of sense:

Whatever is a subjective expression of a nature is simultaneously also its objective expression. Man cannot get beyond his true nature. ²

Any antithesis between the Divine and the human is therefore illusory. The attributes of the divine nature are the attributes of human nature.

In religion, man projects himself into objectivity as God, then, in turn, makes himself an object to the object, i.e., to God. The personality of God is the personality of man projected. A true religion would make man only an object

1. Feuerbach, The Essence of the Christian Religion, p. xiii.

2. Ibid, p. 11.

to man. Feuerbach asserts confidently, "What I love is my heart, the substance of my being, my nature."¹ It is the principle of love rather than God which should be the object of veneration, because love transcends and harmonizes the difference between the divine and the human. Only through love can we escape the evil God of religious fanaticism.

The old opposition between a noumenal divine nature and a visible nature of the world is merely the opposition between abstraction and perception:

The Divine Being is the human being glorified by the death₂ of abstraction; it is the departed spirit of man.

The distinguishing of God from nature is nothing else than the distinguishing of man himself from nature. God is nothing other than the abstract idea of the species, to which has been given a mythical form.³

The doctrine of the Deity of Christ is a blending of feeling and imagination. Faith in a future life is really faith in the life of the present which is already regarded as the authentic life, and should be perpetuated. The goal of religion is the welfare of man; the relation of man to God is his relation to his own spiritual well being. Feuerbach states

1. Ibid, p. 57.
 2. Ibid, p. 97f.
 3. Ibid, p. 247.

his creed summarily:

Only when we abandon a philosophy of religion, or a theology, which is distinct from psychology and anthropology, and recognize anthropology as itself theology, do we attain to a true, self-satisfying identity of the divine and human¹ being, the identity of the human being with itself.

Feuerbach did not retain the idealism of Strauss which enabled the latter to reserve a feeling of dependence and to regard man as having been derived from the All of the universe, a spiritual principle.² Feuerbach will not get outside the limits of human nature, although he retains, unjustifiably, the language of traditional theology. With Feuerbach's materialism, the Hegelian form of rationalism had revealed its weakness. Its monistic principles were shown to be equally adaptable to a materialistically or to an idealistically orientated system, depending upon the sentiment of the individual thinker. Feuerbach's monism refused the transcendental distinctions of value which Hegel had held, e.g., as between the finite and the Absolute. The end was to give up all idealism and religious feeling in favour of a shallow humanism.

1. Ibid, p. 231f.

2. Pfleiderer, op. cit., p. 135.

C. Biedermann

The Swiss theologian, A.E. Biedermann, (1819-1885) may also be classed as an Hegelian, but he endeavoured to avoid the interpretations of the extreme left and right of the Hegelian school. While seeking to enrich the understanding of the Christian faith with the aid of speculative theology, he wished to give a place to the 'facts' as well as to the ideas and ideals of Christianity. In this attempt he shared an affinity with Rothe. Although he made use of the criticism of Strauss, he maintained a more positive attitude than the latter to the content of the religious truth which remained following the critical work. His thought is comprehensively set forth in his Christliche Dogmatik.

Biedermann's epistemology is the key to his thought, as in the case of the idealists whom we have already considered. In an effort to deflect the monistic tendency of the Hegelian tradition he asserts that the content of Christian dogma is not found in the religious Idea alone but also in the historic form in which Christianity has been brought to consciousness in the Christian community. A real principle, and Biedermann maintains that he is a realist, develops temporally and historically. It is therefore necessary to study coordinately the

1. Biedermann, Christliche Glaube, I, p. 2.

development of the Idea and its historical realization as mediated through the senses. There is an attempt in Biedermann's thought to effect a union of Hegelianism with the Spinozistic parallelism of thought and extension. There is also a close relation to Schelling's harmony of the subject and object.

Christian dogma is the historical impression cast by the consciousness of the Christian community. The study of dogma is therefore historical in character. But in order that the process of dogma in history may be adequately evaluated, its study must be guided by rational principles with an eye to correctness of the logical forms of the historical manifestation.¹ The study of dogmatics can not be carried on without the aid of a speculative system, if it wishes to be scientific.

For Biedermann the possibility of achieving a real knowledge of religious truths is the same problem as the possibility of a scientific metaphysics. The religious 'God' and the metaphysical 'Absolute' are one and the same concept, though reached in differing ways. He attacks Kant's dualism between the metaphysical real and the process of knowing. The limits of metaphysical reality are the same as the limits of

1. Ibid, I, p. 21. "Was der menschliche Geist so in der Geschichte gethan hat, das hat aber die Wissenschaft auch das Recht und die Pflicht zu prüfen, ob es auch in den denkrichtigen Formen geschehen sei."

knowing. Perpetuation of Kant's dualism has led extremists to fixate upon one or other term of the dualism and to develop either a monistic idealism or a monistic materialism.

Biedermann designates his own theory of knowledge 'Pure Realism'. The term has methodological rather than metaphysical meaning. The 'real' is not something which we know independently of the facts of the knowing process, but the facts of consciousness, including both form and content, constitute reality.

Der reine Realismus in der Erkenntnistheorie besteht in der Durchführung des Grundsatzes, das Bewusstsein und seinen Inhalt¹ rein so zu nehmen, wie es uns tatsächlich gegeben ist.

Consciousness itself constitutes a real relation of subject and object, an ideel-reale relationship: "Die Tatsache des Bewusstseins ist die uns am unmittelbarsten gegebene Tatsache ideeller Realität."² Because the subjective and the objective do not have separate existence, as we perceive them in our experience, it is therefore unnecessary to confer upon them separate metaphysical subsistence. They are in fact consubsistentielle.

Pure realism takes the two moments of consciousness, as they are given, holding them together in a unity without subjective alteration. Viewing the subjective and objective

1. Ibid, I, p. 71.
2. Ibid, I, p. 75.

moments of consciousness separately is what leads to the fallacy of the natural-supernatural antithesis and to belief in two irreconcilable substances. ¹ Perception is an undivided relation of the material and the ideal to the subject. It is all that makes out the world for the perceiving subject.

The content of consciousness is neither the 'object' of naïve realism nor a transcendental reality but "stets das Product eines sinnlich-objectiven und eines ideell-subjectiven Factors." ² The object of consciousness is perception-content. That which the mind is able to subjectify and raise to pure ideal consciousness, and so use as the material of thought, must first have been produced by perception. ³ Ideas are sensuous or mental, depending on whether they have entered from outer or from inner perception. But all the material of thought must stand in real rapport with consciousness. The process of thinking fixes ideas and provides the formal element of consciousness. The reason, by its speculative activity, is able to abstract from the sensitive element of experience to achieve logical forms. The processes of pure thought can represent the objects of mathematics, conceive general concepts,

1. Ibid, I, p. 100. "Alle Substanz ist uns essentiell nur als Einheit sinnlichen und ideellen Seins gegeben: jeder wirkliche Körper, jeder wirkliche Mensch, das wirkliche Universum."

2. Ibid, I, p. 114.

3. Ibid, I, p. 125.

and, finally, attain to the objects of metaphysics in which are sought the basis of unity for both the ideal and material elements in our experience.

Upon this epistemological groundwork, Biedermann concludes that the metaphysical basis of unity for experience is a Being which penetrates the whole of world existence and is constitutive of its process:

Den Letzten, alles unter sich begreifenden Grund des Welt-daseins können wir nur als ein Sein denken, in welchem dieses durch das gesammte Welt-dasein durchgehende un den Welt-process constituirende Verhältniss seine Begründung findet. ¹

Kant's ultimate ideas, or postulates, had been necessary for the immanent processes of thought but, as objects of thought, he made them transcendentially remote. This remoteness is what Biedermann would avoid.

There is a psychological and religious element in Biedermann, contrasting with Hegel's identification of philosophy and religion. Religion consists in a personal elevating of the human soul to God, as man strives to free himself from the negative limitations of his finite existence. This subjective raising of the soul to God and opposing of itself to the material finite world, presupposes the being of

1. Ibid, I, p. 150.

God as Absolute Spirit, standing in a real relation to the human Ego. ¹ This mutual relation between God and man takes place within the spiritual life of man, in his spatio-temporal existence in the world. The relation between God and man is not existentially distinguished from man's experience of the world. That which is existentially over against man is finite, not Absolute Spirit in its pure, ideal, spaceless and timeless essence. ²

The Divine element in the processes of the religious life is revelation. ³ Immediate revelation is the self-evidence of God as the Absolute Spirit in the Ego of man, His self-evidence as the metaphysical ground of man's finite mental life. Mediate revelation is constantly given through general nature and the nature of man himself: "Das Medium der mittelbaren Offenbarung ist die Weltordnung, in ihrer Einheit als physische und ^{als} moralische." ⁴ It is a false bifurcation in apology which tries to do justice to the concept of miracle as dependent upon the absolute immediate power of God, and at the same time, insists upon an immanent world-order of God, in the interests of the scientific understanding. The interests of

1. Ibid, I, p. 243.

2. Ibid, I, p. 253.

3. Ibid, I, p. 264. "Subject und Object der Offenbarung ist Gott selbst als absoluter Geist."

4. Ibid, I, p. 284.

faith and of the understanding cannot be separately satisfied, but must be seen in their inner unity with one another. ¹

In his doctrine of God, Biedermann stands closely by the Hegelian position. God is not one spirit alongside of other spirits, distinguished only by the fact that He is absolute spirit. He is pure spiritual being and hence Absolute Being. The Absolute is not mere abstract negation of finite being; this would be nothingness. But the Absolute is comprehensive of all finite being. "Absolut~~e~~ - sein ist: reines In-sich und Durch-sich-selbst - sein und in sich Grund - sein alles Seins ausser sich." ² God, as an independent Being, is transcendent, the logical antithesis of the dependent sense-world; but as Absolute Being and ground of finite processes, He is every moment immanent. ³

The concept of God includes first, the formal description of Absolute Being, and secondly, the actual determinations of Absolute Being within the human spirit. The positive expressions concerning God must come from the second element, the experience of man. In view of this fact,

1. Ibid, II, p. 481.

2. Ibid, II, p. 517.

3. Ibid, II, p. 527. Cf. Ibid, II, p. 548. "Jedes einzelne Moment des Weltprocesses ist in seinem Da-sein und So-sein endlich bedingt und vermittelt durch ~~den~~^{die} allen immanente Naturordnung und hat in dieser Vermittlung seinen absoluten Grund in Gott."

anthropomorphic attributes must be carefully avoided. The attribute of personality is not one which can be attached to God, for this is to introduce a finite character into pure Being. Much rather is God Himself the presupposition of all finite personalities. ¹

The truth that Absolute Spirit is the ground of the world is revealed in the fact that mental and spiritual life rises out of the natural processes of human life. The Absolute Spirit reveals Himself as the norm for the self-objectifying of the finite spirit in thinking, feeling and willing. He is also the norm for the ethical and aesthetic development of man within the circumstances of his natural history. The Absolute does not act as a personal Providence promoting an external finite goal, after subjective fashion and interest. Providence is simply the conviction of faith, that there is an absolute goal for human existence.

Man possesses the image of God in that he is not a mere natural being with an animal soul, but has a potency toward becoming an independently real spirit. The fulfilment of the Divine image within man consists in his achieving a real as well as a formal unity of the self with God, in an immediate unity of love. The image of God is not an isolated

1. Ibid, II, p. 538.

Divine element within man; it infuses his whole being:

Der Mensch hat als endlicher Geist seine gottebenbildliche Bestimmung auf jeder empirischen Stufe seiner natürlichen, von blossen Natur-dasein ~~ein~~gehenden Entwicklung seinem Wesen als Potenz und eben damit seinen subjectiven Geistesleben als Trieb immanent. ¹

The image of God in man represents not only the objective possibility of man's achievement of union with God but it forces him to a recognition of the estrangement between himself and God, and the need of reconciliation. The tendency toward sin in man has its ground in his finite spirit, which is not yet fully united with Absolute Spirit.

The Incarnation is the fundamental principle of Christianity. This Christian principle first became a reality in the religious consciousness of Jesus as He appeared upon the plane of history, and in the faith which arose concerning Him. The content of the Christian faith is not such that it could have been realized in human experience apart from the historical fact of the Incarnation. Here we note his insistence upon the independent reality of nature and history alongside of spirit. At the same time, Biedermann will not allow that the Incarnation introduced a spiritual principle alien to humanity. The Christian faith expresses the true relation between God and man by providing the principle of redemption,

1. Ibid, II, p.577.

which removes the contradiction between God and man occasioned by sin. Concerning the content of the faith he says,

Sein Inhalt muss sich daher doch ausweisen als an sich im Wesen Gottes und des Menschen enthalten und allein als die volle Verwirklichung des darin Enthalteneⁿ.¹

For all time Christ is the historical prototype of the effective redemption principle which is the inalienable heritage of mankind.

Biedermann concludes that the world of finite, spatio-temporal existence has God not only for its eternal and everpresent ground, but as its eternal goal as well. The finite world serves as a medium for God to fulfil His final goal. The finite spirit fulfils its end by a personal communion with the Absolute Spirit, whereby the former subjectifies the Absolute Spirit, as life's ground, norm and goal.

It is questionable whether Biedermann made any improvement upon the Hegelian doctrine, from the point of view of establishing the external world. He tried to do justice to the external world by making his epistemology dependent upon the mediation of the Idea through sense experience. He affirmed that the world has independent existence and is not merely the self-objectification of Absolute Spirit. But the independence which he confers upon the world is only a seeming

1. Ibid, II, p. 582.

independence. The Absolute, as ground and goal of world history and of finite spirits, determines all that takes place in history, according to immanent laws. Historical events must be subjected to a logical critique before they may be incorporated within the fund of knowledge. There is a confidence that the world of scientific study will accord with rationally-conceived logical forms. There is no provision for novel or arbitrary occurrence in experience, but all existence must conform to a logical necessity.

In a sense, this system lacks the element of transcendence in Hegel's philosophy, in that Hegel's Absolute transcended the finite particulars of the world which were moments of its realization. In Biedermann's epistemology the world of finite particulars must eternally exist as the independent vehicle for the expression of the Absolute, in spite of his reference to final goals. Hence, he has no genuine concept of teleology or immortality. The soul is the ideal side of the body and is necessary to give meaning to consciousness; ¹ but it has no priority over the body or persistence beyond it. Biedermann made a distinction between God and the world to provide for the psychological experience of aspiration toward

1. Ibid, I, p. 664.

the Divine, but he did not ascribe to God that transcendence which could give Him creative control over the world or assure an eschatology in which God supersedes the finite world.

CHAPTER V.

BRITISH LIBERAL THEOLOGY

A. Coleridge

The fruits of speculative theology, plucked from the tree of German Idealism, were made current in Britain largely through the theological writings of Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834). It was his express desire to bring to the attention of his countrymen an interpretation of the works of Kant, Fichte and Schelling.¹ In this role he introduced to British theology a liberalizing tendency which had not been significantly manifest prior to his time.² Together with Thomas Erskine, he exercised a commanding influence upon the development of the Broad Church party in Anglicanism. Although he was a staunch defender of the orthodox doctrines of the Church of England, he brought to them a new ideational or 'spiritual' interpretation. He was not content to accept an authoritarian religion, but demanded that religious truth should be in accord with the principles

1. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, p. 94.

2. Hunt, Religious Thought in England, p. 92.

"Coleridge helped most in the transition to a new era."

of reason and science. ¹

Coleridge endeavoured to unite reason and revelation, in his view that the reason is a power which sees by its own light. He accepted the Kantian definition of the understanding as the faculty of judging according to the data of sense perception; but in similar vein to Jacobi, he differed with Kant's definition of the reason. For Coleridge, reason does not have a mere formal or regulative function but it perceives, immediately, the highest objects of knowledge, viz., the spiritual:

The spiritual (corresponds) to the will and the reason, that is, to the finite will reduced to harmony with, and in subordination to, the reason, as a ray from that true light which is both reason and will, universal reason, and will absolute. ²

Reason is in fact a part of the image of God in man. ³

Anterior to his study of the German idealists, Coleridge's thought was grounded in the Platonic idealist tradition. ⁴ In his Treatise on Method, ⁵ he follows the pattern of Plato's architectonic of Ideas:

1. Coleridge, Aids to Reflection, p. 74. "He who begins by loving Christianity, better than truth, will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than Christianity, and end in loving himself better than all."

2. Ibid, p. 23. Cf., Ibid, p. 161. "Reason is the power of universal and necessary convictions, the source and substance of truths above sense, and having their evidence in themselves."

3. Ibid, p. 107.

4. Coleridge, The Philosophical Lectures, p. 40. (Intr. by Kathleen Coburn).

5. Page 7.

From the first, or initiative Idea, as from a seed, successive Ideas germinate.....Method, requires not only the proper choice of an initiative, but also the following it out through all its ramifications.

The essence of things are not united by accident, but by an Idea. Idea and law are correlative terms. There are gradations of Ideas, the highest class being the metaphysical and the spiritual. Theology stands at the summit of human knowledge. In true idealist fashion, Coleridge conceives of an ultimate truth as standing at the apex of all Ideas. He queries,

And is not he the truly virtuous and truly happy man, who seizing first and laying hold most firmly of the great first Truth, is guided by that divine light through all the meandering and stormy courses of his existence? ¹

In grasping the ultimate Truth, mind is not passive but it is undergoing a process of self-realization. Human imaginative powers are the repetition, by the finite mind, of the eternal act of creation in God. ²

In The Statesman's Manual his idealism assumes a more absolute, and thus immanent, character. The human mind encompasses all laws and activities of outward nature, and without the presence of the subject, all modes of existence in the external world would be but flitting shadows.

The fact, therefore, that the mind of man in its own primary and constituent forms represents the laws of nature, is a mystery which of itself should suffice

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1. Ibid, p. 14.
 2. Biographia Literaria, p. 172.

to make us religious: for it is a problem of which God is the only solution, God, the one before all, and of all, and through all. ¹

That he is not here speaking in the language of the New Testament but in that of idealist philosophy is clear when he invites his readers to join with him in the prayer that we may be able to find within ourselves that which cannot be found elsewhere:

That one only true religion which elevateth knowing into being, which is at once the science of being, and the being and the life of all genuine science. ²

Coleridge shared with Schelling the confidence that there is a perfect correspondence between subject and object in the process of knowing. He writes,

All knowledge rests on the coincidence of an object with a subject.....For we can know only that which is true; and the truth is universally placed in the coincidence of the thought with the thing, of the representation with the object represented. ³

The sum of all that is objective he calls nature and the sum of the subjective is self or intelligence. He regards the two as antitheses, but he is unwilling to concede that they should for ever remain so. The perfecting of natural philosophy would consist in the 'spiritualizing' of the laws of nature into those of intellect:

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1. Coleridge, The Statesman's Manual, Append. B, p.465.
 2. Ibid, Append. B, p. 472.
 3. Biographia Literaria, p. 150.

The theory of natural philosophy would then be completed; when all nature was demonstrated to be identical in essence with that which, in its highest known power, exists in man as an intelligence, and as self-consciousness; when the heavens and the earth shall declare, not only the power of their Maker, but the glory and presence of their God. ¹

In Coleridge's opinion, man's belief that things exist outside him can never be more than a prejudice which he dogmatically affirms. But because this prejudice is universally held and is accepted as unquestioningly as the existence of the self, the transcendental philosopher is obliged to accept the situation and to try to offer some explanation. He does so by making the assumption that there is a correspondence of subject and object, and that things outside us must unconsciously be involved in the knowing mind. If this be called idealism, then it is at the same time the most binding realism. The true realism maintains that

the object which it beholds or presents to itself, is the real and the very object. In this sense, however much we may strive against it, we are all collectively born idealists, and therefore, and only therefore, are we at the same time realists. ²

Coleridge abides firmly by his conviction that truth must be correlative with being.

He moves beyond the subject-object antithesis to posit an absolute, independent truth which is founded upon itself and

1. Ibid, p. 152.

2. Ibid, p. 155.

does not require to be mediated. This Absolute is not to be found in either subject or object alone:

As no other third is conceivable, it must be found in that which is neither subject nor object, exclusively, but that which is the identity of both. ¹

The identity, however, is not Schelling's indifference point. The Absolute is a Subject, which becomes such by objectifying itself to itself, but which is never an object except for itself. It carries on a process of self-objectification without ever ceasing to be self-identical. Coleridge's Absolute, although neither subject nor object exclusively, is more intimately related to the subjective-consciousness of man than to the objective world. It is through subjective consciousness that we attain to a conception of the Absolute and of the unity of knowing and being:

If we elevate our conception to the absolute self, to the great eternal I AM, then the principle of being, and of knowledge, of idea, and of reality; the ground of existence, and the ground of the knowledge of existence, are absolutely identical. ²

The transcendental philosopher does not ask what ground of knowledge lies outside our knowing, but only what is the last element in our knowing itself. "We proceed from the SELF, in order to lose and find all self in God." ³ The natural

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1. Ibid, p. 157.
 2. Ibid, p. 158.
 3. Ibid, p. 160.

philosopher, likewise, does not deal with objects lying outside the principle of knowing, which stand in a relation of 'unknowable' cause to experiential realities. He too finds that the principle of knowing and of being are identical and therefore must inhere in an Absolute. ¹

In spite of his philosophical interests, Coleridge did not believe that Christianity is a theory or speculation, but a life. It is a life motivated by a spiritual principle, implanted by God, and capable of surviving the natural life. The validity of the Christian faith is established in the fact that it is suited to our human needs. Christian truth would remain unshaken even if the Bible and all historical traditions were cut off. As we read the Biblical record of the workings of the Word and Spirit, the influence of the same Spirit in our own beings enables us to discern and understand the working of the Spirit upon men in the Bible.² Coleridge finds that revealed religion is in accord with his own philosophical presuppositions:

Revealed religion (and I know of no religion not revealed) is in its highest contemplation the unity, that is, the identity or co-inherence, of Subjective and Objective. It is in itself, and irrelatively, at once inward Life and Truth, and outward Fact and Luminary. ³

1. Ibid, p. 161.

2. Coleridge, Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit, p. 606.

3. Ibid, p. 621

Religion has its objective historical and ecclesiastical pole, and also its subjective and spiritual pole.

The Scriptures express that which is employed in all science. Science whispers that which religion utters as with the voice of a trumpet. "As sure as God liveth, is the pledge and assurance of every positive truth, that is asserted by the reason." ¹ With his belief that the actual and the real are one, Coleridge had little difficulty with the idea of predestination as presented in the Scriptures. Both the necessary truths of science and acts of human volition are always in conformity with the Divine Providence:

In the Bible every agent appears and acts as a self-subsisting individual; each has a life of its own, and yet all are one life. The elements of necessity and free-will are reconciled in the higher power of an omnipresent Providence, that predestinates the whole in the moral freedom of the integral parts.... The root is never detached from the ground. It is God everywhere: and all creatures conform to his decrees. ²

The power, love and wisdom of God fills and shines through the whole of nature and human life. ³

Coleridge, however, does not wish to be classed as a pantheist. He speaks out against the brand of pantheism common among romanticist poets such as Wordsworth. There was a tendency among the romanticists to think of the omnipresence of the Divine in any sense but the legitimate one, viz., 'the

1. The Statesman's Manual, p. 431.

2. Ibid, p. 438.

3. Ibid, Append. A, p. 462.

presence of all things to God.' In the pantheism of the romanticists he finds that

there is an inward withdrawing from the personal being of God, a turning of the thoughts exclusively to the so-called physical attributes, to the omnipresence in the counterfeit form of ubiquity, to the immensity, the infinity, the immutability; ...the attributes of space with a notion of power as their substratum,¹... a Fate, in short not a moral creator and governor!

He protests, in similar vein, that the idea of God held by natural theologians is often little different from the idea of the law of gravitation. But although man's head may thus incline toward a doctrine of pantheism, Coleridge is nevertheless confident that his heart and moral nature ever whisper that we must conceive of a better and higher than ourselves.² God is immanent in the laws of nature but He is also transcendent and independent of His modes of being. He has an inner life of His own which is superior to that which is revealed in His universe.

Coleridge brought to British theology an impulse toward the ingratiating of theology with the modern scientific temper. He tried to show that religion, and particularly the Christian religion, was germane to the needs of the human soul. He popularized that approach to the Scriptures and tradition which would seek in a 'religious idea' the spiritual truth

1. Aids to Reflection, p. 317.

2. The Philosophical Lectures, p. 127.

behind the form in which religion has been mediated and historically developed.¹ He affirmed that revealed religion is not the imposition of an external creed but the revelation of religious truths and values which are properly the possession of man, the element of the Divine within him. A final clue to the motive and character of his theology may be discovered in a passage from The Statesman's Manual in which he reveals his fundamental idealism:²

O what a mine of undiscovered treasures, what a new world of power and truth would the Bible promise to our future meditation, if in some gracious moment one solitary text of all its inspired contents should but dawn upon us in the pure untroubled brightness of an idea, that most glorious birth of the God-like within us, which even as the light, its material symbol, reflects itself from a thousand surfaces, and flies home to its Parent Mind enriched with a thousand forms, itself above form and still remaining in its own simplicity and identity.

B. Maurice

The germinal and suggestive thought of Coleridge had a direct influence upon F. D. Maurice (1805-1872), whom we may consider as a leading representative of the Broad Church party in mid-nineteenth century Anglican theology.

1. Storr, The Development of English Theology, p. 195. "Coleridge was one of the first in England to apply to the Bible the categories of life and development."

2. Page 450f.

The party included such theologians as Stanley, Thos. Arnold, Robertson, Hare and Kingsley. From a position outside Church theology, Carlyle entertained similar views and exerted a like influence. The Broad Church party in contrast with the conservative Evangelical and Anglo-Catholic parties, was sympathetically disposed toward the currents of European thought.

Maurice believed, with Coleridge, in the trustworthiness of rational or spiritual experience in mediating truth. He held that religious truth does not come to man from without, but God is the educator of the soul. Although the span of Maurice's theological writing encompassed the period of the publication of Essays and Reviews, with its radical Biblical criticism, and the publication of Darwin's Origin of Species, he did not show an inclination to come directly to grips with the new scientific concepts.¹ His thought none the less exerted an influence upon a number of other men who were moved to deal with the relation of theology to the rising tide of scientific investigation. Maurice pointed the way toward the apologetic writings of Lux Mundi.

It was a fundamental principle of Maurice that the Divine is very near to man and to the natural order of the world:

1. Wood, Frederick Denison Maurice, p. 16.

If man is capable of knowing God, it must be because there is that in him, that in every part of his being, which responds to something in God.¹

Without the divine order, hidden as it may be, nothing which we behold in the natural order has any meaning or substance. The will of God is the law of the universe and that will is absolutely good. Although man does not create a revelation, there is that within him which demands a revelation. The revelation may come to him through the mediation of various natural channels:

The message may come through any man's voice, through the parent, the wife, the child....It may reach us through the letter of a book, or through music, or through a picture. It may be brought to us through the glory of a sunset or the darkness of a night. It may come by fervent expectations or by bitter disappointment, by calm joy, or by intense anguish of body or soul.² But the source is ever the same Living Word of God.

Maurice is willing to regard all religions of the world with tolerance, as they are all manifestations of the one religious ground.³ The conviction of the Buddhist that his human spirit must in some manner be Divine, reaches its justification in Christianity. The great moral and religious leaders of the ages owe their inspiration to the same source as the Christian of today. He could say:

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1. Maurice, Faith and Action (an anthology) p. 184.
 2. Ibid, p. 217.
 3. Maurice, The Religions of the World, p. 216.

The conscience and reason of Marcus Aurelius could not have been called forth - as I believe yours and mine cannot be - by any less divine Teacher than the one whom he confessed but knew not how to name. ¹

A common ground among all mankind for the appropriation of the Divine is the conscience. There are distinctive laws among various peoples, just as there are separate languages, but the common homage to Law, lying beneath respect for particular laws, is found in all races. This common homage, or fact of conscience, is not only the distinctively 'human' within man but the Divine within him as well. ² The conscience witnesses to a supremacy over us that is of a personal character rather than to an impersonal power belonging to the very structure of the world. He says,

I do not proceed from the world to myself; but from myself to the world; I know of its governor only so far as I know of mine. ³

The awareness of God which a man has within himself is his only ground for positing the power and presence of God in the world without.

Maurice stressed the point that the Bible represents God as the Father of a family. It is this sacred truth which

1. Maurice, Social Morality, p. 225.

2. Maurice, The Conscience, p. 136. "Law carries with it for the Conscience a witness of divinity even when those who administer it have become devilish."

3. Ibid, p. 137.

strengthens the concept of brotherhood among men. ¹ The concept of God as Father can prevent us from bowing before a vague 'world' in pantheistic fashion. In the intellectual questings of men of every culture he finds that

the temptation of one and all has been, to form an abstraction which is called a God, and which may be anything, everything, nothing. The witness in all these hearts has been -- It cannot be so that we arrive at Divinity. There must be the sons of a God. An abstraction, a generalization cannot be their Father. ²

In Maurice the emphasis upon the Fatherhood of God was not only a defence against pantheistic doctrine but it was also a reaction against the stern transcendentalism of an older theology. It suited the temper of the nineteenth century to regard God in terms less austere and remote.

The Incarnation was held central in Maurice's theology, as the supreme example of the eternal union of God with man. The divine Logos has always been present in man. If Christological doctrine has become dull and arid to many minds it is because they have ceased to believe that Christ is the source of all light and all righteous thought and

1. Wood, op. cit., p. 23. "The Victorian era in religious thought is marked by a transference of interest and emphasis from the sovereignty to the fatherhood of God, from the doctrine of the Atonement to the doctrine of the Incarnation, from the concern for personal to the concern for social salvation."

2. Maurice, Theological Essays, p. 74.

actions within man. ¹ Christ is not One whom we have created, nor is He within our control; yet He belongs to each and every one of us. Maurice confesses,

Apart from Him, I feel that there dwells in me no good thing; but I am sure that ² I am not apart from Him, nor are you, nor is any man.

Faith in an actual Son of God must not be absorbed into an abstract philosophical theory, but must rest upon a revelation which is vindicated in experience. Wherever the belief is held that Jesus of the Gospels is the express image of God, after which man himself is created, there we find all that is pure and moral in our convictions. God could only show himself to man in a Person, and in the New Testament He unveils Himself in the perfectly moral Person of Christ. Christ is the root and the fulfilment of all that justice, sincerity and fidelity which exists partially in any man or nation. ³

Jesus Christ atones for man's sin by the influence of His moral perfection and by His manifestation of the Divine love. Maurice affirms that his own theology "rests on the Eternal Love, which overlooks all distinctions and embraces the universe. ⁴ Christ, by His death, did not bear the substitute penalty of human sin but He delivered men from their sins by teaching them of the love of God whereby their separation from

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1. Ibid, p. 50.
 2. Ibid, p. 58.
 3. Social Morality, p. 403.
 4. Theological Essays, p. 115.

Him may be ended. The Resurrection of Christ was not a supernatural event which lies outside the possibilities of genuine human nature:

The Resurrection from the dead is a resurrection for us as well as for Him; it has vindicated man's true condition, not subverted it. ¹

The Ascension proves that Christ was not bound to the conditions of space; and therefore space cannot divide us from Him. As spirits, we are constantly united with Him. The Last Judgment of Christ is not to take place at a distant time which is transcendently remote from us, but we stand before His tribunal now in our innermost beings.

Maurice taught that the inspiration of the Bible is not generically unlike the inspiration which God bestows upon us now. We are able to hear Christ speaking directly to our hearts today:

He can teach us without a theory of Inspiration, which is taking the place, it is to be feared, in very many minds, not only of faith in Inspiration, but of faith in Him. ²

Rational views of Biblical inspiration lack a proper belief in the Holy Spirit. While rejecting a generalized rational view of inspiration, Maurice does not represent the Holy Spirit as acting now and then at special times and places and in some particular individuals. It is true that there may appear to

1. Ibid, p. 223.
2. Ibid, p. 260.

be unique periods in history when the Spirit is working out a new heaven and a new earth:

But such moments, however surprising they may seem to us, obey some fixed law, and are connected by close, however invisible, links, and denote the action and inspiration of One who is dwelling in the midst of us.Thanks be to God for the witness which is born in our day for the spirituality, not of a few men, but of man as man. ¹

The general indwelling of the Holy Spirit does not preclude the concept of His personality, in Maurice's thought. The concept of the Personality of the Holy Spirit prevents men from bowing down to worship their own faculty of worship.

Concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, Maurice states that every state of consciousness which he has discovered in man, together with each fact of revelation which answers to it, points to the truth in Trinitarian doctrine. We do not have to secure the validity of the doctrine through appeals to Scripture, tradition or philosophical inferences, all of which are beyond the scope of the way-faring man. The Name of the Trinity is "implied in our thoughts, acts, words, in our fellowship with each other."² Each part of the Name of the Trinity answers to some aspect of human nature, and of the nature of the universe as well.³ It is therefore false to set

1. Ibid, p. 286.

2. Ibid, p. 315.

3. Social Morality, p. 246. "According to the Christian Creed the Authority of the Father, the Obedience of the Son, lies at the root of the universe, is implicit in its constitution. In a living Spirit the Authority and the Obedience are for ever united."

one part of the Name over against another part, a process which has been the cause of so much theological strife. The Trinity is not a theological tenet which is the special interest of theologians alone. "The Trinity isthe ground on which the Church stands and on which Humanity stands." ¹

Maurice believed that the Gospel of God's love applies to all men and that divine punishments are but instruments of His love. The love of God is reflected in human love and is, in fact, its substance. ² (It was this universalism which cost Maurice his professorship at King's College, London). He advanced the view, in his Theological Essays, that there is no eternal life nor eternal death in the accepted orthodox sense:

The eternal life is the righteousness, and truth, and love of God which are manifested in Christ Jesus; manifested to men that they may be partakers of them. ³

These are gifts of God which are always surrounding man's life and he requires only Christ's manifestation of them to be stimulated to participation in them. On the other hand, eternal punishment is the deprivation of these benefits:

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1. Theological Essays, p. 335.
 2. Ibid, p. 315. "The charity of God may find its reflex and expression in the charity of man, and the charity of man its substance as well as its fruition in the charity of God."
 3. Ibid, p. 340.

The eternal punishment is the punishment of being without the knowledge of God, who is love, and of Jesus Christ, who has manifested it. ¹

Eternity, in relation to God, has nothing to do with duration; it is a generically different quality of life. Maurice was unwilling to project either eternal reward or punishment to a time and place transcendent to present human life relationships.

A characteristic doctrine of Maurice was that the Kingdom of Christ is to be realized here and now. He was a champion of the immanental conception of a 'realized' eschatology. He took practical steps to effect his conviction in his promotion of the Christian Socialist Movement in England. In The Kingdom of Christ he characterizes the Church of England as a true incorporation of the fellowship of the Kingdom because it teaches the full truth concerning the Gospel, sacraments and form of the Church. The Kingdom, however, is universally latent within mankind even where men are not striving to bring about its corporate realization in a Church or social order. He says,

That the Kingdom of Heaven is within us, not through some effort of ours to believe in it, but because it has always been - when we knew it and dreamed of it least, - I am more and more convinced. ²

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1. Ibid, p. 341.
 2. Faith and Action, p. 225.

The proclamation of the Divine Kingdom, that the Son of God has appeared and will hereafter be Lord of the universe, is an announcement which is never outmoded, "because it is a proclamation of the eternal Law of the universe, which wears not out, which grows not old." ¹

In The Kingdom of Christ he countered the conviction of the Quakers that ecclesiastical and liturgical forms have no place in religious life. Reason may indeed be the one faculty of man which is able to comprehend the Being who transcends space and time, but all of man's other faculties are under the conditions of space and time. In view of this latter consideration,

It would be nothing strange or contradictory if the facts which embodied the revelation should be such as at once presented him to all the faculties which we possess, and enabled that highest one to realise its own peculiar prerogative of looking through them. ²

The old Catholic Church, and latterly the Reformers, set up Churches or Kingdoms because they could not see how else God's purpose could be realized in the actual world. The Book of the Acts describes the founding of a spiritual society within the framework of this present world. The Book of Revelation describes a Kingdom of Heaven upon the earth, to which all kingdoms are meant to be in subjection.

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1. The Religions of the World, p. 242.
 2. Maurice, The Kingdom of Christ, I, p. 179.

The idea of the Scriptures.....is that Jesus Christ came upon earth to reveal a kingdom, which kingdom is founded upon a union established in His person between man and God, between the visible and invisible world, and ultimately upon a revelation of the divine Name. ¹

That the establishment of the Kingdom involved miracles, according to the Bible, does not take away from its this-earthly character and design. If Christianity is a religion which is to satisfy the dreams of past ages and to show to all future ages the law which is to govern them, and the Giver of that law, then it is difficult to conceive how such a religion could enter the world without miracles. ²

In the New Testament we do not read about a 'religion' but of a 'Kingdom of Heaven! Where we first hear of it in the words of John the Baptist, it is announced as being at hand. Men were therefore taught that Christ came to unveil the Divine life, of which human life in its social condition and circumstances was to be the image, reformed in terms of the higher life. The principle of the Kingdom of Heaven, that the Chief of all must become the servant of all, is the foundation for an ethic which is demanded by the very relationships of the human family. ³

In Roman times the Christians, like the Imperialists, recognized a supreme will as the ground of order for man. But

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1. Ibid, I, p. 261.
 2. Ibid, II, p. 159.
 3. Social Morality, p. 246.

the absolutism of the Christians' creed, concerning the relation of God to his creatures, was such that the Church could not exist side by side with the Roman state without conflict:

That a Fatherly Will is at the root of Humanity and upholds the Universe was the announcement which shook the dominion of capricious daemons and the throne of an inexorable fate in the Roman Empire. ¹

It was inevitable that the Christian creed should take shape in a worldly corporate society and that it should challenge every other visible order. If the Kingdom of Heaven is not concerned with the reformation and regeneration of the world, then Maurice believes that Christians have been imposing a lie upon their fellow men.

It is not necessary for us to dream ourselves into some imaginary past or Utopian future to rectify our social morality. We must rather hold fast to our own present professions of moral conviction, and believe in what we utter when we are most earnest. Then we may uncover the principle of self-sacrifice which is latent within us, and which lies at the root of humanity itself. This basic principle supplies the foundation for all national equity and freedom. If we cling to this and similar innate principles of morality, there will be discovered, beneath all the politics of the Earth, sustaining the order of each country,

1. Ibid, p. 26.

upholding the charity of each household, a City which has foundations whose builder and maker is God. It must be for all kindreds and races....." 1

Consequently, Christianity must wage war upon all sectarian and all imperialistic divisions within human society, in order to further the universal fellowship of humanity in terms of the Christian ethic, i.e., within the Kingdom of Heaven.

In spite of the fact that Maurice gave central prominence to the principle of the union of the human and the Divine represented by Christ, and its present realization in the Kingdom, he did not wish to support an apotheosis of humanity. He did not believe that the Divine is based in any way upon the human, but that the very opposite is true.² He held that the prevailing form of unbelief in his day was "the tendency to look upon all theology as having its origin in the spiritual nature and faculties of man." 3

While Maurice left room for the creative Divine sovereignty and eschewed pantheistic doctrine, the purport of his work was to make the Divine more at home in the world. His Christian Socialism was an emphasis which continued to

1. Ibid, p. 413f.

2. Ibid, p. 102. "I can value every conception which men have formed about a union between the human and divine. I can see why those conceptions must become false when they assume the human as the ground of the divine."

3. The Religions of the World, p. 246.

grow throughout the nineteenth century, and its activistic outlook is a distinctive feature of present-day Christianity.

In criticism, it must be pointed out that Maurice's emphasis upon the relevancy of the Gospel to the human situation was made at the expense of weakening the distinctiveness of the Christian faith in relation to other religions, and by making its benefits indecisive. If Christ is already united with every man, whether he knows it or not, the Gospel revelation offers only a stimulation to the latent divine potentialities of the human spirit. Rationalistic idealism had prevented Maurice from accepting transcendental doctrines of revelation, redemption and eschatology.

C. Martineau

James Martineau (1805-1900), the outstanding Unitarian theologian of the last century, may be included among those who were influenced by Coleridge. With the freedom of thought encouraged in his tradition, his interpretation of religion was more closely related to philosophical and psychological studies than was the case with Maurice. He approached theology with the attitude of a reverent religious spirit rather than from the standpoint of confessional loyalty.

Martineau believed that the immediate presence of God may be perceived in the laws of our rational nature; but

he is not on that account to be classed as an idealist. ¹ He did not place exclusive emphasis upon thought. God is power and love as well as wisdom. The external world is not merely the object of a thinking subject; it is the result of the causal activity in space of an omnipresent loving and intelligent Will. Martineau was convinced that no monistic scheme, beginning from the standpoint of nature, self, or God could adequately explain the facts of our nature and life. ² The external world is a reality which limits and resists our volitional activity.

Martineau would determine the common element persisting through all forms of religion and credulities of undeveloped reason, and in this element, discover the point of contact between man and God:

To this universal essence of all religion we must resort as the shrine at which human appeal and Divine response are in contact with each other, and whispers pass and flashes gleam from behind the veil of the Infinite. ³

It is within our conscience that we are able to distinguish between the religious and the non-religious. Only that which inspires us with enthusiastic trust, speaks to us in religious tones. No one can sincerely worship either nature beneath him

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1. Upton, Dr. Martineau's Philosophy, p. xxxvii.
 2. Martineau, Types of Ethical Theory, II, p. 5.
 3. Martineau, A Study of Religion, I, p. xxiii.

or a thought within him. As long as we are detained by our own thought we are not religious. We must come to the point where we recognize that our ideals, which point beyond us, are the 'real', "the abiding presence and persuasion of the Soul of souls." ¹

If we live in union with God, we must touch God at many points, for our beings are complex:

We suffer, we think, we will; what we feel is the pressure of his laws; what we know is the order of his reality; what we choose is from his possibilities: and how can there fail to be a path to him from the sensitive, the intellectual, and the moral passage of our history? ²

The emotions of wonder, admiration and reverence further reveal the ideal essence, speaking to us respectively of causal Thought, divine Beauty and transcendent Personality. These objects lie beyond the sphere of phenomena and attest to the existence of a sphere of spiritual realities. But Martineau insists that whatever higher inspiration visits our world, it must do so through the organs of our nature. It must use our receptive capacity and mingle with our existing thoughts. He finds, in the fact that men are often deflected into a course of action sublimer than their own highest dreams and ideals, a proof that there is a transcendent, Divine will in control of human life.

1. Ibid, I, p. 12.
2. Ibid, I, p. 16.

Martineau characterized natural religion as a human elaboration in which a number of steps are placed between ourselves and God, by a method of mediate knowledge. Revelation, on the other hand, is immediate and intuitive. It is therefore first in the order of thought; and it is only in the subsequent history of its influence that it is rendered amenable to the conceptions of natural religion. The Divine life imparted by revelation exists in various intensities within men, and in a more or less veiled form. With some it may consist of vague impersonal ideals and dim yearnings, while others may feel themselves to be brought into the personal presence of the supremely Holy. But to all, the immediate experience of God in revelation declares the reality of God both within and beyond the world and its conditions:

The immediate self-disclosure of God to the human spirit,carries in it the consciousness of a present Infinite and Eternal, behind and above as well as within all the changes of the finite world. It brings us into contact with a Will beyond the visible order of the universe, of a Law other than the experienced consecution of phenomena, of a Spirit transcending all spirits. ¹

There are transcendental relations implicit within the characteristics of human consciousness, in reason, conscience and affection, which cannot be covered by any conceptions borrowed from sensible experience, but which must be recognized as

1. Martineau, The Seat of the Authority in Religion, p. 311.

indications of a capacity to receive revelation.

It is peculiarly within conscience, however, that we find the germ of a piety with a transcendent reference. As moral agents, we are not objects within nature but transcend it in causal activity. At the same time, we ourselves experience a moral dependence upon the universal Cause, which is not felt in the course of sensible experience. Ethics must therefore be treated before religion, because they contain implicitly the resources from which religion draws its characteristics and its glories. ¹ Moral consciousness is a basis of communion between man and God which has always been a possibility, although unfortunately it has not always been completed in the conscious answer of the worshipper:

So does the law of righteousness spring from its earthly base and embrace the empire of the heavens, the moment it becomes a communion between the heart of man and the life of God. ²

When God is regarded as bearing a holy partnership with the conflicts of our humanity then ethics may be saved from the cold light of a metaphysical theory.

Although the authority of conscience is known by the self, it cannot be created by the self. We cannot repeal the compunctions of the conscience. While the act of perception

1. A Study of Religion, I, p. 18.

2. Ibid, I, p. 26.

reveals an 'other' than ourselves; the act of conscience reveals a 'Higher' than ourselves:

We know ourselves to be living under command, and with freedom to give or withhold obedience; and this lifts us at once into divine relations, and connects us with One supreme in the distinguishing glories of personal existence, wisdom, justice, holiness. ¹

Conscience is the overflowing of the holiness of the Divine Mind. Our moral natures are not intelligible unless we see in them a response to an objective Holy Law which pervades the universe. ²

Relative to us, God is identical with the superlative of all that we reverence. He is the summit of every man's conscience. If we wish to make conscience the interpreter of God we have but to contemplate the elements of moral perfection, and these are the attributes which we may ascribe to God. God is likewise the informing authority of moral society, and the lineaments of His nature are to be seen in the corporate life of righteousness:

The moment the two truths are apprehended, of the spiritual unity of our nature, and of the All-righteous as its Source and Head, the idea inevitably

1. The Seat of Authority in Religion, p. 70.

2. Ibid, p. 75. "The causality of the world..... is at the disposal of the all-holy Will; and whether within us or without us, in the distant stellar spaces or in the self-conscious life of the tempted or aspiring mind, we are in one divine embrace, - 'God over all, blessed for ever'."

follows of our united human life as constituting a kingdom of God; for it has no binding laws that are not His: no offences, that are not sins: no just penalties, that are not expressions of His will: no noble passages of history, that are not the march of His advancing Providence. The Theocratic conception of Society rests upon indestructible foundations in our nature, and must for ever return, unless that nature becomes atheistic. ¹

The moral consciousness which establishes the point of contact between man and God is also the ground of man's freedom. The volitional nature of moral beings saves them from pantheistic absorption. A moral being stands within his own sphere, "a free cause other than the Divine, yet homogeneous with it." ² A man cannot even declare himself a pantheist without self-contradiction; for in so doing, he indicates that he has an independent assertive power which deals with the not-self as objective. There is actually a fundamental duality of causation exercised by God and man which eliminates a simple identification of the two. God has created us with power to act as causes, and, for a season, He has given us faculties of freedom. "He may be the cause of all our possibilities without being responsible for our actualities." ³

If God is immanent in the various aspects of our conscious life, this does not exclude the fact of his

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1. A Study of Religion, II, p. 47.
 2. Ibid, II, p. 167.
 3. Ibid, II, p. 168.

transcendence as well. There may be no epistemological need for any domain lying beyond the phenomena we see and feel to serve as a receptacle for God; but, at the same time, Martineau feels that it is impossible for nature to swallow up the supernatural. The genuine theist holds to a conception of God in which the Divine Being is greater than the sphere in which He is said to be immanent:

It is sufficient for him, if God be somewhere more than the contents of nature, and overpass them in his being, action and perfection. Let this condition only be saved, there is no limit to the admissible identification of what are called 'natural powers' with his, or of organic purpose with his design. The pantheist, on the other hand, makes no return for this concession to his favourite conception of 'immanency': he can allow no 'transcendency': the life with which he charges the universe has no actual or possible existence but in the aggregate of finite things: it speaks its whole being in the cosmic laws. The opposition therefore lies between All-immanency and Some-transcendency.¹

Martineau takes his stand in favour of Some-transcendency.

There could be no truth at all in the immanent conception, he claims, unless the latter is conditional upon the Transcendent. Changing phenomena could have no meaning save in relation to the Permanent. The permanent objects of theology and the changing objects of science co-exist. Theology and natural science, with their respective spheres of study, may therefore persist side by side:

1. Ibid, II, p. 142.

It is no hindrance to theology if the laws of phenomena pursue their undeviating way: it is no hindrance to science if the laws of nature are laws of God. ¹

It is sufficient if we keep clearly in mind the 'distinction' between the two fields of study. Nature is characterized by birth and death, by an aggregate of objects, an organism of intelligibles; while God is eternal, the infinite Subject and Intellect of which nature is the expression.

In order to believe in God's transcendence to the sphere of nature, it is not necessary to hold that He is external to the world in terms of a spatial metaphor. All cosmical forces may be regarded as media of His conscious causality, and nature as the evolution of His thought. Belief in the final causation of God does not involve a belief that the locale of the Divine Mind is outside the objects which He directs:

Why a supramundane Disposer should be obliged, in order to carry out his purposes, to absent himself from the scene and succession which he orders, and 'stand outside', is altogether unintelligible. ²

Martineau insists that Christianity knows nothing of an Absolute God abstracted from the living world. We can say nothing about the Transcendent apart from our scientific, religious, and moral experience. An adequate theism requires

1. Ibid, I, p. 8.
2. Ibid, I, p. 329.

only that the immanence of God does not absorb the faculties of human personality and that His transcendence does not stop short at the limits of the cosmos, but stretches beyond it as infinite possibility.

God, as Cause of the phenomena of the world, possesses all power. This is not to affirm, however, that there are no possible transcendent limits to His power:

From the finite we cannot legitimately infer the infinite. When therefore we speak of God as almighty, the epithet is, thus far, warranted only if it is content to cover all the might there is, and must not be understood to mean mighty for absolutely all things.

It is a scholastic and artificial enterprise to ascribe infinitude to God in a strictly metaphysical sense. It does not imply any weakness in God to limit His attributes to their actual manifestation in the finite world which He has created. Since all causality is volitional, the actual world is only one of an unknown number which might have been brought into being by its Author, had He so willed.

Because man inevitably thinks of the living energy which he beholds in the physical universe in anthropomorphic terms, there is a native provision for conceiving the doctrine of monotheism. Man cannot help investing the forces of nature with an identity similar to the pattern of his own identity.

1. Ibid, I, p. 375.

The intellectual dominance of his own personality will assure the attribute of unity in his thought of the Divine. It would require the experience of two or more universes to make possible for thought the idea of more than one Divine Will as the source of all things. ¹

Martineau devotes considerable discussion to the evolutionary hypothesis, which had made a far-reaching impression upon theology in the latter half of the nineteenth century. He declares that the immanent conception of growth and development, although valid within limits, does not do away with the need of transcendent causation. The lesser cannot cause the greater. A cause must be measured in terms of its most perfect rather than its most elementary effects. He insists on regarding "consciousness and free-will as initiating stages of evolution not deducible from the preceding." ² The evolutionist may be able to effect a series which is empirically successive, but it will be logically disconnected. Martineau claims that it is impossible to find the moral in the immoral and the order of right in the order of might, as the evolutionary theory would do. It is his sentence against the theory that, "it subjugates character to science, instead of freeing it into religion." ³ In so far as a theistic view

1. Ibid, II, p. 381.

2. Types of Ethical Theory, II, p. 398.

3. Ibid, II, p. 424.

is made subject to the evolutionary theory it will inevitably issue in a false immanence, i.e., one which is not conditional upon a realm of transcendence.

Concerning the person of Jesus Christ, Martineau took a position not far removed from that of many liberal theologians of his century who belonged to a Trinitarian tradition. The Divine can be found, if anywhere, in what Jesus Christ was in moral and spiritual character and in His relation to God. Unfortunately, Christianity has come to mean some doctrine about Christ rather than the religion of Jesus:

Christianity understood as the personal religion of Jesus Christ, stands clear of all the perishable elements, and realizes the true relation between man and God. ¹

Martineau believed that Jesus Himself made no pretensions beyond that of claiming to be the herald of the Kingdom. In the religious sphere it is not necessary for a revealer to know more than we, but that he should be better than we, and so help us to approach the supreme Perfection. Jesus Christ has given men help toward developing that capacity of their souls whereby they are able to have an immediate apprehension of God. He says,

If Jesus of Nazareth, in virtue of the characteristics of his spirit, holds the place of the Prince of Saints, and perfects the conditions of the pure religious life,

1. The Seat of Authority in Religion, p. 651.

he thereby reveals the highest possibilities of the human soul, and their dependence on habitual communion between man and God.¹

As we might expect from a Unitarian, Martineau avoids any transcendent doctrine of Christ, but makes Him an outstanding moral and spiritual representative of the race.

In Martineau we have seen a reaction against some of the materialistic implicates of science and against the pantheistic strain in idealism. By his assertion that the Divine Being is not exhausted in His cosmic manifestations, he reserves a sphere of transcendency. With his ethical idealism and the freedom of causation which he claims for human beings, he resists a deterministic system - whether materialistic or idealistic in character. Men are held to be more than transient modes of God's eternal life, or epiphenomena of the process of a material universe.

There was a strain of mysticism in Martineau's thought, with his characterization of God as the 'Soul of souls', and his belief that man is in immediate contact with God at other than rational approaches of human nature. In the main, however, his position was that of an ethical rationalism. Whatever other avenues of approach might be open

1. Ibid, p. 652.

to God he would accept only a religion which was consonant with reason and conscience. His assumption of a Transcendent Deity was akin to Kant's moral postulate of the existence of God. He would make no metaphysical assertion concerning the transcendent being of God, other than to say that transcendence is necessary to assure our independent moral and religious consciousness. In so far as we can know the Transcendent we must know His attributes in the moral and religious experience of mankind¹ - in the ideals of truth, beauty, righteousness and love.

1. Hunt, op. cit., p. 245. For Martineau "the religious element innate in man is identified with the supernatural."

CHAPTER VI.

LATE BRITISH IDEALISM

A. Green

The idealism of Coleridge had been expressed in scattered and often vague writings; consequently his influence had consisted in the initiating of an impulse rather than in the promotion of a system. It was in the latter part of the century that doctrinaire idealism became a significant factor in British thought through the writings of a group of neo-Hegelians. This transplanting of German idealism to British soil exerted a powerful influence upon British theology, an influence which was maintained on into the twentieth century.

Thomas Hill Green (1836-1882) was perhaps the best known of this group of idealists. His philosophy stemmed from a primarily ethical interest in contrast with the more theoretical preoccupation of the German idealists. He found the basis for faith in God both in the intellectual and in the moral nature of man. Our knowledge of the world pre-supposes the existence of a self-conscious Subject in the universe Who is the ground of all our knowing. Our moral striving after ever higher and better forms of life is likewise evidence for

the existence of a Best which is both the source and end of our ethical life. Religion is the continual putting to death of a lower and the coming to birth of a higher self, a truth most effectively illustrated in the life and teachings of Jesus. It can be seen from this that Green's thought was teleologically orientated throughout.¹

The obvious fact of the transcendence of the human mind over nature served as a basis for Green's idealism. If man were a being composed merely of natural forces he could not form a theory about those forces, much less about himself. Green asks, "Can the knowledge of nature be itself a part or product of nature?"² This transcendence of the self over nature, however, does not place the self out of relation to nature. We never experience nature as a series of unrelated objects; and therefore we must assume that there is a principle in consciousness which corresponds with the bond of relation existing among the objects of consciousness. That bond must be rational or spiritual rather than material in character.

1. Works of Thomas Hill Green, III, p. xci (Intr.)
For Green, "God is the ultimate being or reality, that to which we come when we think out what is implied in the existence of a world to be known and a mind to know it, that of which there is already a forecast in the most elementary factor of human experience, and of which the fullest human experience is still only a forecast."

2. Green, Prolegomena to Ethics, p. 11.

Nature is a system of related appearances; and related appearances would be impossible without the action of an intelligence.

Green shares the familiar protest of earlier idealists against Kant's separation of appearances from a transcendent ground. He believes that the relationship among appearances does not depend upon inherence in an unknown ground but in a knowing subject. Such idealism as this, he believes, does not necessarily dispense with the concept of material substance.

It is not denied that there are material substances, but their qualification both as substances and as material will be found to depend on relations. By a substance we mean that which is persistent throughout certain appearances. ¹

But matter could not exist without mind, nature without the non-natural. The self-distinguishing consciousness which is necessary for the existence of material nature, Green calls a 'spiritual' principle. ²

Nothing can be termed 'outer' or objective save for a consciousness. Therefore all the objective knowledge which we humans are able to obtain only by stages, must have eternally existed for a consciousness. Our acquisition of objective knowledge is a growth toward this eternal consciousness.

The most primitive germ from which knowledge can be developed is already a perception of fact, which implies

1. Ibid, p. 55.

2. Ibid, p. 56.

the action upon successive sensations of a consciousness which holds them in relation, and which therefore cannot itself be before or after them, or exist as succession at all. ¹

Our consciousness thus develops as the reproduction or realization, under empirical conditions, of the eternal consciousness. The latter, though not existing in time, is the condition of there being an order in time. It cannot itself be the object of experience but it is the condition of all our intelligible experience. It has reproduced itself in man in such a manner that although man is limited by an animal organism he is able to be an object to himself. This ability we may distinguish as the divine element within man.

Man expresses himself in relation to the manifold world through both thought and desire. Will is the expression for the union of thought and desire, as the subject strives toward the realization of an idea. Man unfortunately can never come to the completion of his striving toward fuller development, and can speak only negatively of the state of moral perfection:

Yet the conviction that there must be such a state of being, merely negative as is our theoretical apprehension of it, may have supreme influence over conduct, in moving us to that effort after the Better which, at least as a conscious effort, implies the conviction of there being a Best. ²

1. Ibid, p. 75.
2. Ibid, p. 180.

God is the presupposition and end of the moral life.

The same divine principle of will, however, may make the voluptuary seek self-gratification. Will in itself may be bad. Green therefore makes the reason superior to will. Man's innate consciousness of what he ought to be must be dominated by the rational faculty:

With this consciousness directed in the right path, i.e., the path in which it tends to become what according to the immanent divine law of its being it has in it to berests the initiative of all virtuous habit and action. ¹

If it seems presumptuous to speak of the Divine thus manifesting Himself in human subjects, it would be still more unreasonable to think of Him as realizing Himself in an entity to which self-consciousness cannot be ascribed. It is man's distinctiveness over nature that it is only in him that God realizes Himself consciously.

The possibility of moral action demands the existence of an eternal Subject Who is all that our temporally-existing selves are able to become:

He is a Being in whom we exist; with whom we are in principle one; with whom the human spirit is identical, in the sense that He is all which the human spirit is capable of becoming. ²

The moral idea in man, no matter how vague or unfulfilled it may be, is a communication of the idea as it is in God.

1. Ibid., p. 186.

2. Ibid., p. 198.

Whatever else God may be, He contains within His being the 'ideal' manhood; and man, on his part, possesses partial divinity.

The moral reformer must possess an idea for moral improvement which has never yet been actualized. This ideal forever remains tantalizingly removed. As long as man continues to have an animal nature with struggles and conflicts, a contrast of degree will remain between himself and the Infinite Spirit:

He must think of the infinite spirit as better than the best that he can himself attain to, but (just for that reason) as having an essential community with his own best. ¹

At his very best, man must retain an attitude of reverence before the infinitely Holy; but even so he will not forget that his principle of self-development is within himself. If it were possible for him to fully realize his potential development, his bliss would be an intrinsic value and not derived from any agency outside himself. The ultimate good for man must be the full development of the human spirit.

Green's attitude toward the positive doctrines of the Christian faith is avowedly that of a philosopher. Christian doctrine must be transferred into a philosophy and

1. Ibid, p. 329

assimilated by the reason under the form of ideas. If religion is to exist we must be able to imagine God in terms amenable to the human understanding. The most adequate imagination of Him is in the form of a man in whom the end of moral progress has been fully attained.

Christ is the necessary determination of the eternal subject, the objectification by this subject of himself in the world of nature and humanity. ¹

The belief in the necessity of a Divine Incarnation under the conditions of ordinary human life also carries with it the demand that this Person should still be spiritually present to us. The transition from historical manifestation to present spiritual reality is most fully represented in the Fourth Gospel, as compared with other Scripture. It is the most spiritual of the Gospels in that the historic event of the Incarnation is made rationally immanent. ² It is assumed by Green that the historical is more certain when it has been taken up into a moral and spiritual concept.

Green holds that God is identical with man at the point of man's innate ideal. But this is not tantamount to saying that God and man are identical in every respect, or that God does not far supersede man in power and presence.

1. Works, III, p. 183.
2. Ibid, III, p. 219.

Green says,

We need not be frightened.....from the doctrine that man is identical with God on the ground that it makes God 'no more than man'.the acorn is in possibility identical with the oak, but the oak is nothing to the acorn. ¹

The identity of God with man consists in His being the condition of man's ability to be conscious of his own self, the realization of man's determinate possibilities, and the completion of all that is imperfect and unreal in man. The identification is not one of equality.

God is Himself reason and His self-revelation is reason. The revelation, however, is not given in abstract categories but takes its form from, and gives life to, the history of man. His revelation therefore is not given in a day, or even in a century. But the revelation given in history has to be immediately and subjectively appropriated through reason:

It is in himself and in his thought, which yet is in the truest sense a revelation, and yet a revelation through Christian influence, that each one of us finds God, if he find him at all. ²

The great failing of theology has been to externalize God in a mystery or in a Book. The original revelation must needs have been given in historical events, but the only way in which the revelatory values can be passed on is through

1. Ibid, III, p. 225f.
2. Ibid, III, p. 244.

rational ideas.

Green regards the nature of man as indivisible. His moral and spiritual desire to be reconciled with God is one and the same as his scientific impulse to know nature. The two motives are bound together in the unitary spiritual nature of man. Science should not then try to discredit reason or the spiritual; the very existence of science is a witness to the spiritual. The scientific sceptic should recognize that just because the spirit is the source of all knowledge, it cannot be itself one of the objects of knowledge. ¹

In view of the fact that the spiritual, or rational, is the basis of man's scientific ability to study nature, we should not expect to find the Supreme Spirit in outer nature, but in the spiritual agent, i.e., in man himself. We are able to find God in countless phenomena of subjective mental activity, and failure to do so is only a mark of spiritual obtuseness:

It is our very familiarity with God's expression of himself in the institutions of society, in the moral law, in the language and inner life of Christians, in our consciences, that helps to blind us to its divinity. ²

In the most highly developed forms of the Christian religion, awareness of God has reached a stage such that He is no longer

1. Ibid, III, p. 265.

2. Ibid, III, p. 270.

perceived as an outer power but is conceived as reconciled with man and indwelling. This is the point at which the true Kingdom of the Spirit has been reached.

This account of Green's teleological idealism shows that he left room for a qualified transcendence of God, in that He is always beyond the actual knowledge and perfection attained by men at any point in time. But it is a transcendence of degree; God is identical with man in possibility. He is ideally what man should become. On the other hand, God is immanent within man as the rational ground of man's intellectual and moral activity and as the ideal, of his self-realization. This immanence is inferred rather than immediately experienced.

The Divine attributes cannot be known except in the form of human ideals of the highest in thought or moral action. Transcendent attributes, or manifestations of transcendent power, cannot be received in human experience. As long as striving and process continue we cannot say that at any point we have experienced God as he truly is. The knowledge of nature which we possess never satisfies our rational desire for complete reality. This unfulfilled desire is faith,¹ which must stand as the bridge between ourselves and the complete realization of God.

1. Ibid, III, p. xcix.

Green's system was not tortuously built up by logical processes to an absolute, as in the construction of Hegel. He thus avoided in some measure the inclusive, pantheistic character of Hegelianism. The teleological movement of Green's system makes the world and man not actually but potentially Divine.

B. J. Caird

Another version of neo-Hegelianism, more fully developed along logical lines than that of Green, was advanced in the writings of the Scottish theologian and philosopher, John Caird (1820-1898). His position was shared in its main details by his younger brother, Edward Caird, the noted interpreter of Kant. John Caird reacted strongly against the phenomenalism of modern science, which he considered to be an inadequate basis for the unification of experience or explanation of the moral and spiritual life. Only a rational organon could harmonize the divergent elements of life and provide meaning to existence.

He directed a strong polemic against Herbert Spencer on the ground of the latter's limitation of science to things finite.¹ He acknowledges that Spencer retained a trace of

1. E. Caird gives a fuller discussion of Spencer's agnosticism in The Evolution of Religion, I, pp. 96 ff.

idealism in his belief in the Absolute as the presupposition of experience. But in Caird's opinion Spencer's Absolute was a mere phantom. It was postulated as a necessary basis of experience but could be received in no experience. It was merely the abstract background of phenomena, before which we must have silent reverence. By maintaining an agnostic attitude toward the Absolute, Spencer had thought that he assured freedom to phenomenal science.

Caird tries to show that without first having a rational Absolute, Spencer is not justified in bringing together the two ideas, viz., that knowledge is limited to phenomena and that an Absolute must be postulated. He charges that the theory of Spencer

first creates or conjures up a fictitious logical entity, and then charges consciousness with imbecility because of its inability to think that fiction. ¹

An adequate view of the relation between thought and reality, subject and object, sees an indissoluble unity between these correlatives. No limit can be drawn between phenomena and an unknown background, any more than we can separate the centre of a circle from its circumference or one end of a stick from the other. That which remains when we have separated thought from an unknown something is not an Absolute, but non-entity.

1. J. Caird, An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion, p. 19.

Spencer's agnosticism concerning his transcendent Absolute leaves his position practically indistinguishable from materialistic science.

Caird holds that although individual mind may be limited and contingent in its scope, universal mind must be presupposed in all objective reality. The human mind must find a permanent unity manifested in all thinking beings and in all objects of thought. In such a rational Absolute, the finite mind finds, not a limit to its thought, but its fullest realization and freedom. Instead of ending with the negative infinite of the unknowable, the rational and religious mind is constrained by an inward impulse to rise to the higher Infinite, which is revealed in all the riches of nature and human experience. The Absolute requires our reverence because it extends beyond the reaches of our thought, not because it is unknowable. We must conceive of that in Him which lies beyond our knowledge, as, though unknown, not unknowable." ¹ To worship an unknowable would be to turn away from all the concrete world of thought and being to deify a thin logical abstraction.

The philosophy of the Absolute does not exclude intuitive experience in the religious life; but its function is to seek an explanation of the religious life in terms of a

1. Ibid, p. 27.

deeper harmonizing unity than that which intuitive religion or science discovers. Religion is thereby enriched and the finite consciousness returns to union with the Infinite. The philosophical study of religion is not the thought of a finite observer concerning the being of God and our relation to Him; it is simply a self-conscious development in which the finite mind finds its true self in the life of God. "God is not proved or known by anything foreign to His own being. He reveals Himself in thought and to it." ¹ Our moral and religious knowledge is not limited to inexplicable intuitions; its justification comes from its being a moment within the organic whole of eternal order and system, i.e., within God Himself. The rational knowledge of God is, in one sense, God's knowledge of Himself. He is the beginning and end of all thought and being. ²

Revelation cannot impart religious truth to us any more than intuition, unless it is related to the reason. It is a contradiction in terms to say that thought can think anything outside itself. That which is above reason is really contrary to reason. "Nothing that is absolutely inscrutable to reason can be made known to faith." ³ Man's reason, however,

1. Ibid, p. 48.

2. Cf. E. Caird, op. cit., I, p. 166. "All our life is a journey from God to God."

3. Ibid, p. 73.

is able to rise from its finite limitations to achieve an ever higher communion with the Infinite, a process assured by the very nature of man. Man, possesses the image of God; a qualification which enables him to reflect the spirituality and infinitude of God. ¹

Caird believes that our rationality and spirituality consist in our power to transcend the narrow bounds of our individuality and find ourselves in that which appears to lie beyond us. "To be ourselves, we must be more than ourselves." ² The perfect union of our individual life with God, however, is a goal which constantly eludes our pursuit. We continue to seek the goal only because we are conscious of a relation of identity with the end. ³ This consciousness of our identity with the Divine, through rationality, is the ground of our confidence in God's existence. Caird restates the ontological argument:

As spiritual beings our whole conscious life is based on a universal self-consciousness; an Absolute Spiritual life, which is not a mere subjective notion or conception, but which carries with it the proof of its necessary existence or reality. ⁴

There is a sense in which we have to renounce the

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1. J. Caird, The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity, I, p. 177.
 2. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion, p.116.
 3. Ibid, p. 128. "If we were wholly finite we should never be conscious of our finitude."
 4. Ibid, p. 150.

self in religious aspiration; but that to which we surrender ourselves is actually our truer selves. This would not be so if God were a self-identical Being outside us. In view of our organic relation to God, no matter how far we may advance in knowledge or in goodness, we will not be appropriating qualities which are alien to us. The development of our latent potentialities is coordinate with the Divine self-revelation:

If we regard the history of the world as a manifestation of a divine idea or purpose which is ever moving on to its fulfilment, it becomes in a deeper way a revelation of the infinite possibilities of our spiritual nature.¹

Caird pays considerable attention to the problem of pantheism and deism, in their divergence from Christian theism. He perceives the root of the problem in our naïve attempt to use ordinary representative thought to explain the kind of unity which pertains to spiritual things. We cannot discover in images borrowed from sensible experience a representation of the relation of all finite souls to God. By such thought processes we invariably end with a pantheistic identification of the finite spirit with the Infinite in which their organic relation is overlooked. A narrow rationalizing logic likewise tends to be inadequate in dealing with the concept of the Infinite. It either construes a pantheism which reduces the world and man to an illusion, or, on the other hand, it

1. The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity, I, p. 190f.

constructs a materialism or anthropomorphism in which there is no place for God. If one is strictly governed by the logical law of non-contradiction in thinking of the relation of the Divine to the human he cannot escape denying God or annulling the independence of man. An adequate philosophy will avoid such an over-simplification.

What Pantheism gains by the sacrifice of individuality and responsibility in man, by depriving the finite world of reality and reducing Nature, Man and God, to a blank, colourless identity, a true philosophy attains in another and deeper way. It gives us a principle in the light of which we can see that God is all in all, without denying reality to the finite world and to every human spirit. ¹

Nature, finite mind and God are not irreconcilable ideas but belong to one organic whole.

The traditional concept of God as substance is wholly misleading. Frequently the concept is interpreted to mean that God is the unknown substratum of the finite world. From another point of view, substance may be regarded as causality in the sense of omnipotent force; the world then is viewed as an isolated finitude apart from God, or as an abstract pantheism which is not distinguished from Him. A more satisfactory concept of God apprehends that He is infinite spirit and that His highest creation is not a world, but spirits made in His own image, capable of knowing and loving Him. It is

1. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion, p.221.

the very essence of the nature of these finite spirits to renounce their separate existence, to restrict the self which divides them from God, "and to return not into pantheistic absorption, but into living union with Him from whom they came." ¹ What God is and what He creates belong to one organic whole; and He has designed all nature and history in such a manner that He may be all in all.

Caird made the acute observation that pantheistic doctrine emphasizes the absoluteness of God to the point of making the world an illusory appearance. It is only from a superficial viewpoint that we can describe pantheism as a deification of the world. In actuality, it makes the world of appearance a phantom. Pantheism represents a desire, as in its great proponent, Spinoza, to get behind the world of change and finiteness, rather than to accept or explain it. The pantheist is really affirming that God is the only substance there is, and that temporal things are insubstantial. ² All things must be contemplated under the form of eternity.

Against this position Caird declares;

The great and fundamental defect of Pantheism is, that in the effort after unity it expunges instead of explaining the existence of the finite world; in other words, that it gives us an Infinite which obliterates, instead of comprehending and accounting for, the finite. ³

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1. Ibid, p. 245.
 2. The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity, I, p.87.
 3. Ibid, I, p. 104f.

Caird admits that in one sense all philosophy is pantheistic, unless it be dualistic (and therefore unsatisfactory from his point of view). An idealistic philosophy tries to explain all things in relation to God and to avoid rendering the universe. But it does not simply merge the finite with God, any more than it confers an exaggerated independence upon the finite.

The Infinite which is reached by annulling all determinate being is merely a logical abstraction. It is a unity achieved by abstracting from all the diversified existences of the world rather than by explaining them. What such an abstract pantheism achieves is not union with the Infinite but an unreal mimicry of that union. Its infinite would not lead us to a larger and fuller life but to a life in which all thought and realism are lost. He makes this summary judgment against pantheism:

It is the passing away, as if by a suicidal act, of all consciousness, all activity, all individuality, into the moveless abyss of the unconditioned.²

Caird describes what he calls the 'Christian deification' of the world. According to Christian thought, there is a genuine sense in which it may be said that God is in all things. Every object, no matter how insignificant it may be,

1. Ibid, I, p. 104 and 140.
2. Ibid, I, p. 109.

is the revelation of the Divine presence.¹ But it is a deification which makes distinctions of value within world existences rather than to apotheosize all things alike. The weakness of crude, unchristian pantheism is its deification of the base things of a man's nature along with the highest. It tends to promote contentment with things as they are and to bring to an end all moral struggle and creative action.

Turning next to deism we find that, in contrast with pantheism, it sets God over against the world in an antithetical relation. Caird believes that such an external contriver or ruler is a being who is less than the true God. He is merely a bigger or colossal man. The concept of an external creator fails to do justice to the richness of relationships existing among material things or within the mind:

Even in the material world there are things which we cannot conceive of as made from without; and a made mind, a spiritual nature created by an external omnipotence, is an impossible and self-contradictory notion.²

We cannot reasonably bridge over the gap between external power and material things by means of the concept of an arbitrary, inexplicable act of creation. The complex relation of elements involved in the existence of even an inanimate stone implies that God is in the stone and constitutes its inner essence.³

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1. Ibid, I, p. 111.
 2. Ibid, I, p. 118.
 3. Ibid, I, p. 122.

A satisfactory view of creation sees the Divine power at work as a formative energy which lies within things:

We are carried here beyond the Deistic Creator, dwelling in some celestial sphere and operating from above, to the conception of an immanent God, manifesting himself in, and in a sense identifying Himself with, the inner life and being of the world. ¹

When we consider the deeper reaches of man's life, we must recognize that spiritual qualities cannot be 'rained into the soul.' They must be developed there in a movement of freedom. The deistic view would deny all spiritual as well as physical freedom to men. An arbitrary God governs the universe according to fixed laws implied in His work of creation. The inner relations of the world of existence are left an unexplained enigma.

Wherever deism does in fact permit us to see signs of intelligence in nature or in the providential rule of the world, it is making a concession to an essential want of our nature, a desire to feel at home with God. But in so doing, deism repudiates its characteristic idea of absolute, external rule, and is trying to show us a deeper, more intimate view of God and our relation to Him. We are permitted to see that God is righteousness and love, that His action is determined

1. Ibid, I, p. 122. Cf. E. Caird, op. cit., I, p. 318. "I should not expect to find what is above nature anywhere, if there is not something above nature everywhere."

by His essence, and that it is of His very nature to externalize Himself in a world. If we free ourselves from all traces of deistic thought we shall come to see that so-called supernatural events, lacking all rational explanation, are lower and not higher expressions of Divine power. The widespread attachment of special value to such events betrays the survival of deistic notions about God in Christian minds. ¹

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity, when properly understood, is a safeguard against both pantheism and deism, by the distinctions which it makes within the Divine activity. Caird justifies breaking up the functions of the Godhead by pointing out that the unity comprised within an organism has no life save in the activity of its several organs. So also the highest Unity realizes itself through its differentiations. We can readily observe that every living intelligence is in a sense not one but two. When locked up by itself it has only a bare possibility of being. To conceive of God then as a self-identical infinite would be to make Him not greater but less than man. Existing by Himself, God could not be love. To realize Himself in all the fulness of His nature He must set something over against Himself to be known by Him and to call forth His love. ² The relation of 'other' to God has been

1. Ibid, I, p. 136.

2. Ibid, I, p. 72.

fulfilled (in part) by man; but man had a beginning in time and can not have been an object to God from all eternity. It is in Christ that God's purposes for the world have been eternally given. Christ is the human element in God.¹ In the Fourth Gospel we learn most clearly that Christ is the 'other' of God which exists eternally.

The Incarnation has not only revealed, under the form and conditions of time, the human elements within God, but Christ has also revealed the Divine elements within men.² In Christ the Christian life has been perfectly realized. He had a mind which was the perfect medium of the Divine intelligence and a heart that throbbed in unison with the Divine. The atonement which Christ effected was to show us that the peace of tranquillity may be had through union with God. He taught us that our reconciliation with God must be upon a moral basis.

The highest blessing which He has procured for us is simply participation in that life of love of which his whole earthly history was the manifestation.³

1. Ibid, I, p. 157. "If man cannot be explained without ascribing to his nature a divine element, it follows that the divine nature cannot be understood without ascribing to it a human element." Cf., Ibid, II, p. 102.

2. Cf. E. Caird, op. cit., II, p. 233. "Christ is divine just because he is the most human of men, the man in whom the universal spirit of humanity has found its fullest expression."

3. J. Caird, The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity, II, p. 193.

We participate in the life of union with God by becoming more perfectly human in terms of the pattern of Christ's life.

The presence of Christ, in its essence, is never withdrawn from us. With the Resurrection, He ceased to be the friend of a few men to become the indwelling life of all believing souls, "a presence not intermittent, but constant, transfused through their inmost being in all regions of space in all ages of time." ¹ The only knowledge of Christ which is of lasting importance is the ideal meaning of His teaching and of His actions. His disciples therefore were not in a more favoured position than we. The doctrines of the Ascent of Christ and the Descent of the Holy Spirit, are pictorial presentations of the paradoxical truth that "the divine principle which manifests itself in the human person and life of Christ never did nor can pass away from the world." ² For in the fact that individual believers and the Church corporate still experience the presence of the ascended Christ, we are reminded that the spiritual life transcends our finite thoughts and feelings and yet is also within us, enabling us to fulfil our true destiny.

In principle, the system of Caird does not differ substantially from that of Hegel, which we have evaluated

1. Ibid, II, p. 238.
2. Ibid, II, p. 247.

elsewhere in these pages. British idealism came in the post-Darwinian era when the theory of evolution had become widely accepted and the idea of progress more firmly established through the advance of science. British idealism therefore had a wider appeal as a moral and spiritual interpretation of life compared with German idealism which was confined mainly to academic circles. The developmental and optimistic character of idealism commended it to the spirit of the age. In the Britain of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the revival of idealism served as a stay against the agnosticism and materialism invoked by phenomenistic science. A philosophy which rested upon a rational harmony could not indefinitely persist; but for a time it convinced many reflective minds of the divine character of life, and that the God whom science tended to exclude was actually 'at home' in the world.

CHAPTER VII.

THE THEOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS VALUES

A. Ritschl

In the latter half of the nineteenth century the most influential German theologian was Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1889) who gave his name to a significant theological movement. His thought marked a break from the dominance of Hegelian rationalism. Although Ritschl had been an idealist at an early stage of his career, he revolted against the use of metaphysical categories in theology. He developed a theology of moral and religious values based upon the historical revelation of God in the Christian Church, or Kingdom of God.

Ritschl's theology was subject to an uncertain epistemology which wavered between historical positivism and remnants of the idealism which he had formally renounced. He expressly admitted his indebtedness to Lotze for the former emphasis. With Lotze, he shared a Kantian background, but rejected Kant's separation of a metaphysical, noumenal world from the phenomenal and historical world. He recognized in phenomena alone, the thing, as the cause of its phenomenal

signs, as the end which they serve, and as the law of their constant changes. ¹

Upon such an epistemological basis, the field of religious truth may well include a study of all the phenomenological sciences. Ritschl insists, however, that the field of distinctively Christian theology lies within the experience of the Church or Kingdom founded by Christ. God is not received through reflective categories but He is known as the signs of His presence and work are evidenced within the Christian community. Contrary to the individualistic approach of Schleiermacher, he emphasized the corporate and historical locus of religious apprehension. ²

Religious judgments are directed upon the same objective data as the judgments of science. The distinction between them is that scientific judgments are theoretical while religious truth is apprehended in value-judgments. It is true that the scientific judgment may also involve valuing; but its evaluation will be dispassionate, whereas in moral and religious judgments the thinker distinguishes himself in value from all the world about him. The metaphysician likewise views the world from a coldly objective height, tending to lump mind and

1. Ritschl, Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung, III, p. 20.

2. Ibid, p. 29f.

matter together in one unbroken world-view. The religious thinker, on the other hand, distinguishes man from the appearances and effects of nature. Not only his view of the world but his thought of God centres upon the value which accrues to us for the realization of our human blessedness. ¹

Ritschl considers that metaphysical knowledge is superficial. It fixes attention upon isolated objects in general, then later relates them to one another without regard to the concrete relationships of historical reality. He denies, however, that he excludes all metaphysics from theology. There is one religious concept which offers scope for metaphysical thinking, viz., the doctrine of God. ² This concession does little to establish the theological role of metaphysics; because he goes on to assert elsewhere that by its means no concept of God as conscious personality can be formed. Metaphysical arguments offered in proof of the existence of God are merely concepts about world unity. Although it appears to have been the desire of Ritschl to represent God as a Being transcending the sphere of phenomena, the practical method of his theologizing ruled out the possibility of making statements

1. Ibid, p. 376. "Alle Erkenntnisse religiöser Art sind directe Werthurtheile. Das was Gott und göttlich ist, können wir auch dem Wesen nach nur erkennen, indem wir seinen Werth zu unserer Seligkeit feststellen."

2. Ritschl, Theologie und Metaphysik, p. 38.

about God, other than positivistic judgments made from the standpoint of the historical revelation in the Christian community. At the same time, it is an injustice to say that Ritschl reduced God to a subjective value-judgment. He believed that God was objective to our valuing and that the data of religious experience and history are 'given' by Him.

Ritschl rejects natural religion along with metaphysics. Natural religion consists of general religious concepts which have been abstracted from nature and which may be held independently of positive religious experience. In such a system of belief God is commonly regarded as an abstract cause divorced from the real life of nature. A genuine, living theology will view God as intimately bound up with the life of the world and manifest in phenomena:

Wenn man Wirkungen richtig denkt, so denkt man die Ursache in den Wirkungen. Es ist nur der falsche Ansatz des vulgären Menschenverstandes, dass man die Ursachen in einer Raumfläche vorstellt hinter der Raumfläche, in welcher man Erscheinungen anschaut, die man als Wirkungen jener Ursachen vorstellt, oder dass man die Ursachen in einen früheren Zeitpunkt setzt, als die Wirkungen. ¹

The effects of God's action which we experience do not represent their Author as a remote being, but they convey Him to us as immediately present in our experience.

1. Ibid, p. 46.

Ritschl also proscribed mysticism as an avenue to knowledge of God. Medieval, scholastic psychology had encouraged this type of piety because of its preoccupation with the 'thing' behind phenomena and its belief that the soul is one with its object in the sphere of the unio mystica. Mysticism overlooked the actual historical revelation of God in Christ and in His Kingdom. It was not that Ritschl decried 'religious experience', but mysticism represented to him an undesirable kind of religious experience. He sought to balance the experiential with the historical and ethical character of the Christian faith. He pictured the twofold relation by means of his famous figure of the ellipse, the two foci of which are the experience of personal redemption through Christ, on the one hand, and on the other, the ethical Kingdom of God within history. ¹ Historically-conditioned experience within the Kingdom of God is the only experience which can speak authoritatively of faith and its doctrines.

He agrees with Luther's psychological answer to the question, 'What is it to have God?' God is the possession of men who make trust in Him their highest good. They do not find God as a result of intellection but they take Him up in a spiritual activity in which feeling, knowing and willing meet

1. Rechtfertigung, p. 11.

together in a meaningful experience.¹ The soul is not passive but active in relation to the historically given revelation. It recognizes that there is a distinction between its own causal activity and the outer causes which act as stimuli to its perception.² In this belief, viz., that the soul's activity is different from the activity of the outer world, idealism is repudiated.

The scientific theologian must therefore study the Christian religion in terms of its own peculiar experience of God's gracious action, and in the responsive ethical action of the Kingdom. Christianity can be interpreted only in the light of itself. We can know God only in our personal experience of Him:

Der wissenschaftliche Beweis für die Wahrheit des Christenthums wird überhaupt nur in der Linie des schon von Spener ausgezeichneten Gedankens gesucht werden dürfen. Wer den Willen Gottes erfüllen will, wird erkennen, dass Christi Verkündigung wahr ist.³

The test of the validity of the Christian faith will concern its ability to give the believer a sense of mastery over the world. The justification of Christian doctrines depends upon an immanent human norm of value.

The Kingdom of God, through which revelation is

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1. Ibid, p. 21.
 2. Ibid, p. 22.
 3. Ibid, p. 24f.

mediated, is supermundane, in so far as it is ideally regarded as superior to the partial and imperfect forms of ethical community ordinarily found among men:

Das Reich Gottes, auch als gegenwärtiges Erzeugniss des Handelns aus dem Beweggrund der ^{als Motive} Liebe, also wie es in der Welt zu Stande kommt, ist überweltlich, sofern man unter Welt den Zusammenhang alles natürlichen, natürlich bedingten und getheilten Daseins versteht. ¹

The Kingdom of God goes on unchanged, even though the natural conditions under which the spiritual life is lived may alter. Within it the practical life of man is founded upon a supernatural God rather than upon an uncertain concept of nature or man. The men who are united within the Kingdom and share in its goals bear upon them the impress of the supernatural and supermundane. ²

It is only from within the Kingdom, in its world-setting, that one can apprehend the concepts of God, sin, conversion, eternal life, or the truth of Jesus' significance as founder of the religion. These concepts are not transcendent abstractions but involve a relation between God and the world:

Der Kreis, in welchem eine Religion vollständig zur Anschauung kommt, ist nur durch die drei Punkte Gott, Mensch, Welt zu beschreiben. Denn es handelt sich jedesmal darum, dass die in der Welt stehende

p. 6. 1. Ritschl, Unterricht in der christlichen Religion,
2. Ibid, p. 8.

Religionsgemeinde, gewisse Güter in der Welt oder über der Welt durch das göttliche Wesen zu gewinnen sucht, weil dasselbe über die Welt mächtig ist. ¹

It would be impossible to conceive of a religion which is accidental in relation to the world and which could be severed from it. Particularly is this so in respect of the Christian religion, in which we confess that God is Creator and Governor of the world.

A rational knowledge of God takes up its standpoint in formal antithesis to God, and never for more than a moment can it transpose itself into the standpoint of God. Genuine dogmatics on the other hand must set forth the actual manner in which salvation is effected by God, through an analysis of the way in which man appropriates the works of God. It is alone within the context of life that God is known. ² This is not tantamount to saying that the world of experience is pantheistic; but in Ritschl's view, God is mediated in and through the experience of the Christian community in the world.

The Christian view of God does not enslave Him within nature but regards Him as a spiritual being Who presides over the works of His creation. God disposes men to eternal life

1. Rechtfertigung, p. 29.

2. Ibid, p. 34. "Ausserhalb der Selbstthätigkeit, in welcher wir die wirkungen Gottes aufnehmen und für unsere Seligkeit verwerten, haben wir auch kein Verständniss der objectiven Dogmen als religiöser Wahrheiten."

through membership in the Kingdom, which is both His manifest goal within the world and over the world. Ethical action within the Kingdom is conceived to be the highest good, and our determination toward a supermundane goal. The concept of God is the ideal bond uniting the Christian's view of the world and his view of the highest good.¹ In Christianity, ethical action is bound up with the religious view of God; which Ritschl believes is not necessarily so in religion as such.²

Ritschl claims that the weakness of pantheism and materialism, in their various forms, lies in the fact that they take the laws of a special area of existence and set them up as the highest laws of all existence, overlooking an explanation of the spheres of life which have been by-passed.³ The phenomena of spirit are left unexplained in these systems; which is likewise the tendency of natural science in general.

Die Collision, welche vorgeblich zwischen Naturwissenschaft und christliche Religion stattfindet, besteht in wirklichkeit zwischen dem mit der wissenschaftlichen Naturbeobachtung verschmolzenen Triebe der Naturreligion und der Geltung der christlichen Weltanschauung, welche dem Geiste seinen Vorrang über der ganzen Naturwelt sicher stellt.⁴

A pantheistic outlook is furthered by the deceptive power of the imagination, which is able to see all forms of reality within some narrow segment of existence, e.g., plant life, musical perception, or logical thinking. This self-deception

1. Ibid, p. 192.
2. Ibid, p. 197.

3. Ibid, p. 198f.
4. Ibid, p. 199f.

has received its greatest impetus from philosophical idealism with its presupposition that the law of theoretical reasoning is the law of the human spirit in all its functions. Ritschl sees that if pantheism should prevail and the boundary between the Divine essence and the world should be wiped out, giving the universe an absolute character, man will then be merely an emanation of a world-soul or a being who is to be superseded by higher forms of development within the universe. In such a system, aesthetic sympathy with the universe or moral resignation before it, can do little to offset the subordination of the human spirit. The only satisfactory view of God regards Him in the light of His worth for us, in our desire to achieve mastery over the world. God must therefore remain an object of faith to us rather than a substance or being which is bound up with the world. ¹

In the Christian life, which is ethically-determined within the Kingdom, faith has no uncertainty concerning the reality of God. The activity of God in the world is without question. The awareness which we there have of God's creative activity, His moral governance of life, and His design for an ethical Kingdom, convinces us of His reality and also of the truth that our own spirits are supernatural. Ritschl agrees

1. Ibid., p. 202. "Gott und Glaube gehören untrennbar zusammen."

with Kant that the moral experience is the ground for validating the idea of God, as the solution to the world's puzzle, and as the basis of unity between knowledge of nature and knowledge of the spiritual life.¹ In the Christian view of God, the actual world and the creative Will which ethically conditions men are ideally bound together. In his moral experience, the Christian gains the insight that his own practical goal is identical with the end for which God created and governs the world.

The Christian concept of God as personality avoids some of the gravest errors in theistic thought. It distinguishes God from the idea of limitless Being whereby He is made the substance of the universe, or from the idea of a First Cause which need not be viewed as loving will, and from the idea of a Pure Being who reflects only in Himself, in abstraction from the world. Concerning the Christian concept of a personal God Ritschl says,

Der aufgestellte Gottesbegriff ist gar nicht so beschaffen, dass er eine Verschiebung in der Pantheismus oder den Deismus erfahren kann. Eine hierauf zu gründende Theologie ist also nicht rationalistisch. Sie ist vielmehr positiv.²

A personal God is not known through pure concepts which lie beyond scientific observation but in the moral and religious experience of men within the historical Kingdom.

1. Ibid, p. 215.
2. Ibid, p. 217.

The concept of God's eternity could have no meaning for us if we thought of it as timelessness, or as time which has no beginning or ending. We cannot abstract ourselves from time in order to distinguish God from the temporal world.¹ The Christian view is that "die Ewigkeit ist im Allgemeinen die Macht des Geistes über die Zeit."² We recognize the eternity of God in the fact that God remains the same in His purposes, amid all the changes in His acts, ever maintaining the goal for which He has created and for which he governs the world.³ Ritschl avoids pushing the thought of God's constancy of purpose into becoming a transcendent concept. We can obtain no knowledge of His purposes of eternal reward or eternal punishment for His creatures. Such knowledge lies outside the possibility of a definitive idea.⁴

Because God is the creator of all that exists, the world is the expression of His own self-activity. All things are constantly comprehended by His self-consciousness:

Es ist kein Bruch in diesem Sein und diesem Bewusstsein denkbar, da kein Eindruck von Dingen oder von Vorstellungen vorkommen kann, welcher nicht im Voraus in die Einheit des Erkennens und des Wollens aufgenommen wäre.⁵

If it appears from this that Ritschl has slipped into the idealist position of the identity of thought and being, we must

1. Ibid, p. 223.
 2. Loc. cit.
 3. Unterricht, p. 12.

4. Ibid, p. 71.
 5. Rechtfertigung, p. 224f.

balance the statement by the reminder that he held to a belief in God's creation of the world in time.¹ The concept of God's free-will in creation and His election of the Church, point to His transcendence over temporal existence. Indeed, the Christian view claims that the Church was elected prior to the creation of the world, and that the latter serves as a medium to effect the eternal purposes of God for His Church.² The world is not a hindrance to God as it so often is to us; God retains His freedom and remains certain of His plan at every step of His creation.

The key to an understanding of the relationship between God and the world is most fully contained in the characterization of God as loving will. Only from the point of view of God's love in Christ can we understand His revelation to the Kingdom or solve the world-problem. A merely formal view of God as personal will could be interpreted pantheistically. Almost any possible content could be ascribed to the bare concept. If we did not join the attribute of love to the concept of the Divine personality, we could not see why God created such a world as He actually did create. His purpose of love determines the direction of His will: "Der Zweck seiner selbst bezeichnet die Richtung seines Willens."³

1. Ibid, p. 284.
2. Ibid, p. 286.
3. Ibid, p. 268.

A concept of God as indeterminate Will could very easily permit Him to be degraded within existence, or to become the Absolute. We know God only as love, in the predicate of His loving activity. If we were to think of God as being first a transcendent Person, Who later took on the attribute of love, then He would not be the living God known to the Church:

Indem Gott als die Liebe in der Beziehung seines Willens auf seinen Sohn und die Gemeinde des Reiches Gottes gedacht wird, wird nichts an ihm gedacht, was er vor seiner Selbstbestimmung der Liebe wäre. Entweder wird er so gedacht oder er wird gar nicht gedacht.¹

If man is to be esteemed as like God in nature, then the human race must be brought under the attribute of unity - a unity different from its natural generic unity. The desired unity may come through love of neighbour. If an ethical unity of love is achieved through membership in the Kingdom of God, then human motives to unity will be enlarged or superseded in supermundane fashion. The unity of the race in love may then become the correlate of the love of God.² In fact such a correlation is not only the goal of the Kingdom but it is, at the same time, the completed revelation of God as love.³ The description of mankind as a perfected community of love is not an additional revelation to be tacked onto the Christian

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1. Ibid, p. 268.
 2. Ibid, p. 267.
 3. Ibid, p. 276.

doctrine of man, but is integral to it.

Ritschl defines Christian freedom as the characteristic of being able to direct one's life through thought of the goal that is to be achieved within the Kingdom. We are completely free only when we recognize that, with respect to the totality of circumstances, our self-activity is dependent upon the freedom of God's love.¹ Our goal is to achieve a correlation with the love of God, and His love is inclusive of all reality. Although we experience only an ambivalence of freedom and dependence, God can see the whole, and freely determines all things by His loving will.

The religious view of the world, regards all natural events as standing at God's disposal. It is not surprising therefore that any unusual natural events associated with His Divine grace are regarded as miracles:

Die Vorstellung von Wundern (steht) in notwendiger Wechselbeziehung zu dem besondern Glauben an göttlicher Gottes Vorsehung, und ist ausserhalb dieser Beziehung gar nicht möglich.²

Although we have neither a comprehension of the future nor a knowledge of the eternal past, we may have confidence in the

1. Ibid, p. 279.

2. Unterricht, p. 14. Cf. Ibid, p. 48. "Der Glaube an die väterliche Vorsehung Gottes ist die christliche Weltanschauung in verkürzter Gestalt."

fatherly providence of God, wherein He regards us as His children. The religious goal of mastery over the world is effected through faith in Divine Providence. ¹ This faith relates independent, supernatural Spirit to all the relationships of the world. We ourselves are given a sense of independence, in the light of which we may evaluate the world about us. On the ground of our experience of reconciliation with God, we believe that He is Lord over the world and our Father, and that He insures that all things will work together for our good. ²

Ritschl is unwilling to ascribe the attribute of deity to Christ on the ground of a substantial or hypostatical union with God; His deity must rest on the basis of the predicates of His life and action. Christ has the 'religious value of God' for us, because He is the perfect expression of God's love and grace. We ascribe lordship over the world to Christ because of His solidarity with the Father, as seen in His institution of the Kingdom of God, which is God's own self-end. His deity is to be inferred from His worldly activity:

Dieses Attribut kann nämlich nicht vollzogen werden, wenn nicht dieselben Thätigkeiten, durch welche Jesus

1. Rechtfertigung, p. 583.
2. Ibid, p. 590.

Christus sich als Menschen bewährt, in derselben Beziehung und Zeit als eigenthümliche Prädicate Gottes und als die eigenthümlichen Mittel seiner Offenbarung durch Christus gedacht werden. ¹

It would be superficial to conclude that Ritschl's intent was to regard Christ as only a superior man. It is on the ground that Christ is similar to God in will, rather than in substance, that His nature may be called Divine. The method of Ritschl's theology, however, limited the attributes of Christ to those expressed in His humanity. No transcendent attributes could be conferred upon Him.

A complete historical evaluation of Christ is only possible within His Church. He serves as a pattern to all Christians, in the independence over the world which He manifested. The normative value of Christ's life is an abiding rule for us, and we know that it is only by His stimulus that we can come into a right relationship with God and with the world. It is this ethical influence of Christ which makes Him central to our faith. According to the New Testament, His deity is proved by His faithfulness in carrying out his Life's calling and His refusal to base His life on that which was temporal and worldly - therefore less than divine. We must not go to the New Testament to find a clear doctrine of the deity of Christ

1. Unterricht, p. 22. Cf, Rechtfertigung, p. 377.

that may be drawn forth exegetically. ¹ We can have no knowledge of a pre-existent Christ. We have no basis for saying that His divine actions were related to inborn qualities of His person. His divinity must be found simply in the historical form of His life.

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Ritschl, establishes a oneness of the human spirit with the Divine. The Holy Spirit is the knowledge which God has of himself and also of His own self-end. It is also the basis of the Church's capacity to receive the revelation of God and to live the ethical life of the Kingdom. ² Because the conscious aim of the Kingdom is identical with God's own self-end, we may conclude that the practical knowledge of God achieved within the Kingdom is identical with God's knowledge of Himself.

The great value of Ritschl's theology lay in its repudiation of rationalism in theological study and its focusing of attention upon the historical Christ and the historical development of theology. But we cannot be satisfied that Ritschl understood the relation between revelation and history from a Christian point of view. It is one thing to say that a knowledge of God must be received in an historical milieu and another to deny any but an immanent, historically-

1. Rechtfertigung, p. 378.
2. Ibid, p. 260.

conditioned knowledge of God. He indicated a recognition that the concept of God may involve metaphysics, accepting the doctrine of creation and the givenness of historical data; but he was unable to bring forward any determinant transcendent concepts. Like Schleiermacher, he barely acknowledges the conditionedness of the world and of history, then proceeds to condition all knowledge of God in terms of historical experience.

Ritschl attempted to come to terms with the main doctrines of the Christian faith (although he said little about the Holy Spirit or eschatology). His historical positivism, however, became, in the hands of others who did not share his Christian 'idealism', a method whereby they developed a syncretistic philosophy of religion. Ritschl contributed materially to the development of the religionsgeschichtliche movement, with its radical historicism. He encouraged the point of view that history, qua history, constitutes revelation. The historical movement in theology was not content to regard Christianity as the final religion but found immanent religious truths in all positive religions.

Ritschl had made a break with the rational a priori of idealism but his pragmatic a priori, the condition that religion must minister to man's happiness, was no more satisfactory in relation to the Biblical view of discipleship. Granted that religious valuing may be about objective

realities or qualities, if the norm remains subjective, the given historical data of revelation may be subverted to serve a humanistic religion. Ritschl's use of the adjective übernatürlich, and the more frequent überweltlich, tended to signify an ideal ethical superiority rather than a transcendent relation.

B. Troeltsch

The theology of Ritschl exerted a two-fold influence. On the one hand it inspired the group of men known as Ritschlians, to pursue a Christocentric theology in which the Christian sources in the New Testament and the historical manifestation of the Kingdom of God were held to be normative for theology. On the other hand, his positivistic, historical approach was appropriated by the religionsgeschichtliche school in their attempt to discover general religious truths in all the positive religions.

These students of the history of religions felt that Ritschl had overlooked the developmental character of history, and hence of religious manifestations. At no stage did they feel justified in speaking of a final religion. They criticized Ritschl on the ground that he had failed to extend his historical method to include a thorough literary and historical criticism of the Christian sources, and that he had not attempted to relate Christianity to other religions and to cultural

and scientific movements of the times. The history of religious movement made historicism its method, in the fullest sense of the word, ruling out transcendent concepts. Even Christianity was shown to be a syncretistic historical development in which elements of Jewish religion and Hellenistic thought were fused together.

Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923) was generally considered to be the leading reflective thinker of the movement. In considering a brief outline of the principles of his thought we shall actually be making an excursion into the theological work of the present century. But Troeltsch represents, in a sense, the culmination of leading trends in nineteenth century theology. We see in Troeltsch a conscious attempt to unite the two dominant theological trends which we have noted in our survey thus far. He tried to unite the positive, historical and experiential factors of religion with the informing Absolute of idealism. As a one-time disciple of Ritschl, he had moved beyond a rationalistic system of idealism; but throughout all the objectively 'given' data of historical experience he perceived the progressive evolution of a Divine purpose.

Troeltsch agreed with Ritschl that religion is not a philosophy. Hence he did not share the confidence of some members of his school that a general philosophy of history, with its discovery of universal concepts, was adequate to

interpret Christian history, or for that matter, the history of any other positive religion. History manifests individuality in its development; and Christianity is an historical individuality. He states his conception of historical development in the following terms:

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 fulfilment of the highest potentialities of each separate department of life. ¹

Each historical religion must therefore be studied by itself and its values appropriated through the impression which they make upon us. It is only in some far-off ideal future that we may catch a glimpse of an universal history.

In developing his doctrine, Troeltsch rejects the absolutistic, metaphysical doctrine of history which had been the heritage of Kant and the idealists. The modern consciousness-philosophy which sprang from Descartes had been extended by the idealists to the philosophy of history, and their interpretation of history had worked the same tyranny as natural law, in its divorce from the spirit. He insists that the historical datum is first of all a thing for itself before it becomes a thing for us. ²

1. Troeltsch, Christian Thought: Its History and Application, p. 14.

2. Troeltsch, Der Historismus und seine Probleme, Gesammelte Schriften, III, p. 43.

Troeltsch observes that the modern scientific outlook has made philosophical system well-nigh impossible; yet he himself resists the tendency to give up seeking for meaning. In all history he denotes an immanent purposiveness which persists through manifold changes and appears in every partial and individual segment of reality. In all the various historical individuations there appear to have been absolutely 'given' original dispositions or laws of development. Such an initiating element may be variously designated as fate, predestination, or creation. Eventually these elements tend to become the logical category through which the actual, existing state of the historical individuation is explained.¹ Belief in such a suprahuman factor in history is an act of faith rather than a conclusion of science. He says that Jesus and Paul and other great religious geniuses have been right: "Gnade und Erwählung sind das Geheimnis und Wesen der Geschichte."²

In the movement of history it is impossible not to see a common spirit working through the impulses and tendencies of its development. Although Troeltsch is willing to describe this spirit as Divine, he is not prepared to assert that a transcendent Absolute, or God, stands at the beginning of historical movements. The presupposition of purposive factors

1. Ibid, p. 38.
2. Ibid, p. 101.

in history is the 'unconscious'. This is not the unconscious of the psychologist; it is simply the recognition that our feelings, actions, instincts, and decisions in history bear far more presuppositions than we can ever consciously know, and that they have a much greater, or different, meaning with regard to the whole than we are aware. ¹

Historical objects must not be thought in abstract isolation, but in relation to other objects, in an unbroken flow of becoming. Keen historical observation will reveal that the various individuations in history are not completely isolated but they are interpenetrated by a Unity of becoming. ² We must see a pattern of suprahuman value in all the individual patterns of history:

Der Glaube an übermenschliche, ewige Werte in der Geschichte, an die Ziele des Geistes, die in aller Arbeit um des Lebens Notdurft und organisatorische Sicherung doch erst den Sinn des so befestigten Lebens zeigen, und dann die lebendige Anschauung von diesen Werten in den grossen Bildern der Geschichte: das ist eine grundlegende Bedeutung für die Weltanschauung. ³

Troeltsch is dissatisfied with both naturalism and historicism, as providing final clues to value and meaning in history. Naturalism tends toward a cheapening of life, while historicism ends in scepticism and historical relativity. The concept of 'individuality', the heritage of romanticism, is the standpoint

1. Ibid, p. 47.
 2. Ibid, p. 55.
 3. Ibid, p. 82.

from which we may properly measure historical worth. The concept of individuality combines within it the thought of the ideal and the actual, both of which combine to create the novelties and imponderables of history and its values.

Der zentrale Begriff der Wertlehre (wird) der der Individualität in dem Sinne einer Vereinigung von Faktischem und Idealem, von naturhaft und umstandsmässig Gegebenem und zugleich éthisch Ausgegebenem. In diesem Sinne ist der Begriff der Individualität der der grundsätzlichen Wertrelativität. ¹

We are not to assume that the expression 'relativity of values' means the same as 'relativity'. It is not meant that anarchy reigns in the doctrine of values, but that ever-new, creative relationships arise out of the interplay of factual and purposive being in history. The 'individual' is capable of faith in a constant purpose running through the apparently indecisive course of history.

Belief that a constant purpose runs through the progressive, relative values of history, constitutes faith in the Absolute:

Die Wertrelativität aber hat nur Sinn, wenn in diesem Relativen ein Absolutes lebendig und schaffend wird. Sonst wäre sie nur Relativität, aber nicht Wertrelativität. ²

The Absolute is a creative will, which, when it has first become manifest in the course of history, may serve as a divine,

1. Ibid, p. 211.

2. Ibid, p. 212.

formative impulse to finite minds. The Absolute may, of course, be conceived only as a myth - as it was in Plato, and also in Christianity. He believes that the Christian concept of a living, Divine Spirit, active in the finite world, is a myth. This myth, however, has led to most acute and precise psychological observations which have probed the riddle of the soul more deeply than any psycho-genetic or rational a priori theories have been able to do. ¹ The mythological Absolute is to be respected as long as it gives meaning to life and history. It is, in fact, only the concept of an Absolute, informing relative or emergent values, which can explain the changing scene of history. The peculiar movement of history cannot be explained through universal, logical or empirical concepts.

Although Troeltsch criticized Hegel's spiritual monism and scholastic dialectic, he appreciated the dynamic principle of development in Hegel's thought. He was not satisfied with the popular idea of progress, united as it was with a scientific teleology. ² The dynamical development of history points toward the achieving of a universal philosophy of history at some remote future, not to a teleological end, postulated on the basis of current empirical science.

1. Ibid., p. 213.
2. Ibid., p. 464.

Der historische Entwicklungsbegriff hat eine universale und philosophische Bedeutung, die immer wieder ~~aus ihm~~ hervorberechen muss. ¹

The idea of development toward an ideal universal philosophy of history is indispensable if we are to retain a sense for unity and interrelation of meaning amidst present historical individuation. The concept of an universal history may be organized on the analogy of existing cultural syntheses, which have been developed out of diverse historical life situations. ²

Troeltsch has made an application of his developmental view of history to the history and significance of Protestantism. He notes that the breakdown of the old scholastic civilization at the Reformation did away with the precise, logical distinction between the Divine and the human, which had everywhere been determined by the Church. The tendency of Protestantism was to confer a higher impressiveness and value upon all the elements of life in the world; and life's ends tended to become an ideal transformation of the present world. Protestant civilization became individualistic and progressive. The authentic Protestant principle he described as

the transformation of the idea of freedom and grace into the ideas of the self-directing personality and a spiritual fellowship having its roots in history, all on the basis of a theism which has taken up into itself the idea of immanence. ³

1. Ibid, p. 656.

2. Ibid, p. 656.

3. Troeltsch, Protestantism and Progress, p. 183.

Protestantism came to be a search for God in one's own feelings and will, and in the course of historical experience.

When Troeltsch applied his historical principles to the significance of Christianity as a whole, he removed the revelatory uniqueness and absoluteness of the faith. He incorporated within his own approach the method of Schleiermacher, in which the analysis of the Christian consciousness provides the data of theology. In the study of the actual, historically-conditioned revelation of God in the lives of men, Troeltsch claimed to find that Christianity penetrates more deeply to the root of man's being than any other religion. The claim of Christianity to universality rests upon the supremacy of its values. In the fact that Christianity has become the religion of such a highly developed racial group as we find in Christendom, there is evidence of its greatness of spiritual power and truth. Christianity has final and unconditional value for us "because we have nothing else and because in what we have we can recognise the accents of the divine voice." ¹ The finality of Christianity for us, however, does not exclude the possibility that other advanced cultures may have their own medium of the divine voice:

The great religions might indeed be described as crystallisations of the thought of great races,

1. Christian Thought, p. 26.

as these races are themselves crystallisations of the various biological and anthropological forms. 1

Religion is an epiphenomenon of culture; and therefore, in Troeltsch's opinion, Christianity should constantly accommodate itself to new concepts of nature, social order, and spiritual outlook.

All religion has a common goal in an ideal Unknown Beyond (analogous to the sphere of universal history), and also a common ground in the immanent Divine Spirit which is guiding the finite mind onward to ever fuller light and truth, "a Spirit which indwells the finite spirit, and Whose ultimate union with it is the purpose of the whole many-sided process."² A final victory for man over his problems and the partial nature of his existence would mean the end of all struggle and freedom -- a situation which we cannot feature. It will ever remain true, therefore, that the religious transcends the moral, i.e., the highest moral idea is always projected into an other-world of the spirit.³ Man transcends history in his aspirations and longing. That is the occasion for the doctrine of justification by faith; man's desire for perfection far exceeds his actual moral attainment.

The Kingdom of God, in Christianity, is commonly regarded as transcendent history and therefore it cannot really

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1. Ibid, p. 29.
 2. Ibid, p. 32.
 3. Ibid, p. 62f.

change the history of natural events:

The Kingdom of God, just because it transcends history, cannot limit or shape history. Earthly history remains the foundation and the presupposition of the final personal decision and sanctification. ¹

General history has conditioned the rise and advancement of the Christian Church. Christian culture grew out of an amalgamation of tensions existing between the values of this world and the supermundane world of religion. The development of such an advanced religion depends upon a favourable historical destiny as well as breadth of spiritual qualities.

Troeltsch believes that there are many indications of the Unknown Beyond which we may encounter during the struggle of the spirit upwards, but the future itself is never revealed to our eyes. Clearly, for him, there can be no revelatory incursion of the transcendent at any time during the course of history:

History within itself cannot be transcended, and knows of no salvation except in the form of devout anticipation of the Hereafter, or glorified transfiguration of partial salvations. The Kingdom of God and Nirvana lie outside all history. In history itself there are only relative victories. ²

In the end, Troeltsch shows himself to be sceptical of even such residualism idealism as that which looks forward to a Kingdom

1. Ibid, p. 68.
2. Ibid, p. 128f.

of the Beyond. He suggests that such an outlook can really make no difference upon the actual course of life. Its struggles will remain, and we shall gain no more ethical mastery than those without a hope for the future. The religious man is merely able to affirm his hopes more joyfully than the man whose prospects are limited to this life.¹ Christianity must remain a compromise between the Utopian hopes of the Kingdom of God and the permanent circumstances of an actual human life.

The immanentism of nineteenth century theology came to perhaps its fullest expression in Troeltsch. His theistic concept was so meagre, however, that his thought represented little more than an optimistic naturalism. The Divine Being is assumed to be transparently visible through all historical development, but at no point in the development can there be a clearly defined doctrine of God. There are no possible transcendent revelatory attributes of God. The doctrine of the relativity of values, implies a provisional and relative view of God. God is in process, even as history is in process. The movement of individual historical forms toward universal history may turn up quite different religious forms and doctrines of God than those which are now useful. It is

1. Ibid, p. 129.

idealism only in the sense of sentiment which moved Troeltsch to retain traditional Christian concepts and to hold fast to his confidence in the Divine purpose informing history. He had no doctrine of origins, other than an appreciation of myth; and he lacked a transcendent doctrine of last things. His belief in emergent Divine values throughout the course of mundane history was little more than a descriptive principle or hypothetical faith which could quite readily be the deliverance of speculative science.

CHAPTER VIII.

COUNTER TRENDS

A. Kierkegaard

Thus far in our survey of nineteenth century theology we have seen that the dominant positions were heavily weighted toward an immanent view of the Divine. We should not close our study, however, without taking brief notice of an incipient reaction against immanentism, which admittedly gained little recognition during the nineteenth century itself. It took the form of a revived transcendentalism, established along radically different lines than traditional views of transcendency. In view of the fact that this reaction had a profound influence upon Karl Barth and the contemporary theology associated with his name, a consideration of its main features may serve as a useful link between nineteenth century and present-day theological discussion.

The Danish theologian and philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) made a radical break with immanentism at a time when Hegelian absolutism was at the peak of its influence. He rejected the possibility of achieving a general theory of knowledge. His theology made epistemological scepticism the prerequisite of faith. His approach to the truth

of religion involved the categories of the subjective and the individual -- the categories of existence rather than of reflection. To attain to truth we must "reason from existence, not toward existence." ¹ It is from within the pathos of existence that one is able to grasp the paradoxical truth of Christianity. ²

Kierkegaard held that an existential system is impossible; it could never be completed. System and finality always go together. Hegel's introduction of movement into logic was a contradiction, for only in existence is there movement and progression.

Every system must be pantheistic precisely on account of its finality. Existence must be revoked in the eternal before the system can round itself out; there must be no existing remainder. ³

The systematic idea comprises a unity of thought and being, while existence is their separation. In existence, therefore, we can have no concept of God which, at the same time, gives us the being of God. On the other hand, the subjective passion of existence constitutes the true synthesis of finite and infinite. ⁴

1. Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments, p. 31.

2. The Journals of Soren Kierkegaard, (ed. by Alexander Dru) p. 89. "The idea of philosophy is mediation -- Christianity's is the paradox."

3. Kierkegaard's Concluding Unscientific Postscript, (tr. by D. F. Swenson) p. 111.

4. Ibid, p. 350.

Existential thinking is individual and subjective. Reflective, objective thought takes no account of the thinker;¹ the subject is accidental, and existence is something vanishing and indifferent. The dispassionate spectator apprehends the world-historical sphere in terms of metaphysical concepts and views it as a relationship of cause and effect. The ethical and religious goal of an eternal happiness, however, can be achieved only by those who are individual and subjective in their thinking. "All eternal decisiveness is rooted in subjectivity."² Kierkegaard goes so far as to say that "subjectivity is truth, subjectivity is reality."³

An objective knowledge of God can be merely an approximation process. God is a Subject and exists only for subjective inwardness. If we approach the question of God's existence objectively, we shall be reflecting upon the problem of whether a certain "object" is the true God. The subjective approach recognizes that truth resides in the relation, and asks only "whether the individual is related to a something in such a manner that the relationship is in truth a God-relationship."⁴ Kierkegaard concludes that, grasping an 'objective uncertainty' with an infinite subjective passion, is the highest truth attainable for an existing individual.⁵

1. The Journals, p. 142.

2. Postscript, p. 173.

3. Ibid, p. 306.

4. Ibid, p. 173.

5. Ibid, p. 182.

Existence may be expressed in three different stages, the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious. If a progressive transition is to be made from one to the other, it must take place through a profound inward decision. The aesthetic stage is the stage of the natural man, in which the basic realities of existence are neglected in favour of immediate pleasure. In the ethical stage, a man chooses the normal life of struggle for self-betterment. Here a sense of guilt arises which can only be dealt with in the religious sphere. At the stage of religion, the individual renounces himself and strives, through infinite pathos, to relate himself to an eternal happiness, an absolute telos, in which his whole existence may be transformed.

Kierkegaard made a definite distinction between two kinds of religion: religion A is the religion of immanence, while religion B is the religion of paradox, or, Christianity. Religion A is a human religiosity in which the individual is content to believe that truth is immanent within his subjectivity. It is believed that all men everywhere have a share of the Divine within them and that the transformation of the individual may take place from within.¹ But in the religion of immanence, there is a constant unrest. The individual senses that he is infinitely guilty before God and thus qualitatively divided

1. Ibid, p. 509.

from Him. His relationship to God is being constantly annulled; and the end is despair.

Religion B (Christianity) makes a complete break with immanence. The religion of paradox can be entered only by a leap of faith. The sense of guilt, which was an alteration within man's own subjectivity, now becomes the awareness of sin, a qualification of the subject's entire being.¹ "The consciousness of sin is the conditio sine qua non of Christianity."² The Christian must remain constantly aware of the qualitative distinction between himself and God.

Christianity is not content to be an evolution within human nature.³ Man's salvation no longer depends upon an inner transformation; he now bases his eternal happiness upon something historical. Kierkegaard reveals at this point that his principle of subjectivity yields only a provisional truth, a truth which brings a man to the position where he must take the leap of faith into the absurd. Reflective or objective processes of knowing would never have induced him to rest his happiness upon something historical. In Christianity the Eternal is not immanently united with man's subjectivity, but

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1. Ibid, p. 517.
 2. The Journals, p. 131.
 3. Postscript, p. 496.

reveals Himself in Christ at a definite point in time. ¹ This is a miracle, and it is only in miracles that God can show Himself to man. ² The revelation remains 'veiled', and does not become a common possession.

In view of the fact that there is an absolute difference between God and man, man most adequately expresses his own nature when he is giving expression to the difference between himself and God. That expression is given in worship, where the worshipper signifies that God is absolutely all for him. ³

Kierkegaard makes the transcendence of God so absolute that he annihilates all rational knowledge of God. When reason pursues a knowledge of God, it comes into a collision with the Unknown, a mere limiting concept. ⁴ Even the knowledge which one receives from God cannot be understood by the reason. ⁵ Rationalism is completely ruled out. It is clear, however, that Kierkegaard did not intend to succumb to the charge of irrationality. He held firmly to the doctrine of a self-authenticating Divine revelation. Only God can create within man the condition for learning the truth. ⁶ The

1. Ibid, p. 290F. "Christianity is no doctrine concerning the unity of the divine and the human, or concerning the identity of subject and object; but the fact that God has existed." Cf. Philosophical Fragments, p. 83. "Faith and the historical are correlative concepts."

2. The Journal, p. 134.

3. Postscript, p. 369.

4. Philosophical Fragments, p. 35.

5. Ibid, p. 37.

6. Ibid, p. 10.

Teacher, who is God Himself, must bring the truth to man. It is because He cannot be conceived that God came in the form of a servant. ¹ The Teacher alone can prompt the learner that he is in error and be a Saviour to him:

Moved by love, God is thus eternally resolved to reveal himself His love is a love of the learner, and his aim is to win him. ²

When God miraculously implants His revelation in the human vessel He makes a new creature. ³

The condition for knowing God must be received anew in each succeeding generation. There is no conceptual capital which can be handed on second-hand. "A successor who receives the condition from God himself is a contemporary, a real contemporary. ⁴ For the actual contemporaries of Jesus it was an historical fact that God came into being. For the contemporary of Jesus today it is an object of faith that God has come into being:

The question is if one will give assent to God's having come into being, by which God's eternal essence is inflected in the dialectical determinations of becoming. ⁵

Kierkegaard views the disjunction which he has made between God and man as a disjunction for us. It is an unlikeness based upon our finitude and sin. He does not support a

1. Ibid, p. 51.
2. Ibid, p. 27.
3. Ibid, p. 56.

4. Ibid, p. 56.
5. Ibid, p. 72.

Deistical view of God's relation to the world, but believes in a most intimate providential control of all things. God created all things ex nihilo.¹ There is nothing independent over against God. Although he granted a measure of independency to man, we nevertheless owe everything to Him. He constantly sustains the universe:

It is so impossible for the world to exist without God that if God could forget it it would instantly cease to be.²

We cannot really grasp the idea of providence, any more than we can grasp the idea of redemption. It must be believed. Providence means that God is concerned about the individual. Belief in redemption is a faith that God will continue His providence, that He will ever care for the individual.³

God does not exist immanently, in terms of the general concept, simply because He does not exist. God only is. It is for man alone that He exists, and then He can exist only for faith.⁴ It is faith which sees the Eternal holding together the cleavages of existence. Faith presupposes that God is the middle term in everything a man does. It is unbelieving man who is not conscious of the union of God and man.⁵ The unbeliever vainly tries to comprehend God's relation to the world by means of a concept.

1. Ibid, p. 181.

2. Ibid, p. 46.

3. Ibid, p. 171.

4. Ibid, p. 173.

5. Ibid, p. 133.

By the attribute of the omnipresence of God, Kierkegaard understands that He is not only present everywhere, at all times, but that He is wholly present in His presence.

He is not, as it were, broken up and partially present in each and wholly present to himself through a sort of succession; that is pantheism. He is wholly present in everyone in particular and yet in all things; that is theism, personality, individualism. ¹

This position is not to be interpreted as an uniform deification of all existence, in which God is the only term. Kierkegaard believes that his view does not reduce all individuation to God, but confers a new value upon the individualities within the organic whole of the world --- "just as an army would not be smaller because every soldier was a general in spirit." ² This view of God's presence does not seem to leave room for God's creative purpose in history -- for the doctrine of election. The music of life is pitched an octave higher without changing the melody.

Kierkegaard had made an absolute break with immanent rationalism and religiosity, but he cannot be charged with being an ultimate sceptic. He believed in a transcendent revelation of God, immediately perceived in faith. As we have seen above, he believed also in the immediacy of Divine providence. But from the point of view of his positive contribution

1. Ibid, p. 83.

2. Loc. cit.

to theology, it may well be objected that Kierkegaard's radical individualism and discontinuity is not wholly adequate to an historical faith -- important as was his hyperbolic re-emphasis upon the gulf between a Holy God and sinful man. God's revelation has been made in history, and the Church has been obliged again and again to make definitive statements about that revelation. Kierkegaard's exclusion of revelation from the historical plane and from rational statement makes it appear close to the ineffable of the mystic. His one great concession to the historical, in keeping central the manifestation of God in Christ, was not developed into a well-rounded Christological doctrine. It has been aptly suggested by H. R. Mackintosh¹ that in some respects Kierkegaard was not paradoxical enough. The tension between the Divine and the human is a feature of every aspect of existence. The paradox lies in the fact that the discontinuous and the continuous exist together in human life and history.

1. Types of Modern Theology, p. 250.

B. Kähler

In Martin Kähler (1835-1912) we can readily discern a herald of twentieth century Barthian theology. He shared the revulsion of Kierkegaard against rational categories of thought; and as a contemporary of the scientific historical movement in theology, he reacted strongly against universalized concepts of history. He centred his theology in the Biblical revelation, at the heart of which stands God's self-revelation in Christ. In Biblically-recorded events we are confronted by an indissoluble unity of the historical and suprahistorical. The Bible, Church, and personal experience are in constant interrelation in Christianity.

Kähler insisted, like Karl Barth in our own times, that theology is a work of the Church. Christianity is not comprehended by its historical manifestations, and, therefore, the study of Christianity cannot be carried on by the general science of history. It is to the individual that the Holy Love of God is conveyed; and it is only through an uniquely individual experience of the action of God that one may become a theologian.

Die Theologie ist die Wissenschaft der Offenbarungs-Religion und darum wie die Offenbarung Gottes in Christo durchaus eigenartig und Selbständig. ¹

1. Kähler, Die Wissenschaft der christlichen Lehre, p. 10.

The philosophical method of seeking the universally valid is not appropriate to Christian thought. Neither psychological and anthropological empirical research, nor ontological and ethical metaphysics can secure an understanding of the historical event in the fullness with which Christianity understands it.

Christianity is more than an historical phenomenon; it is suprahistorical. Some of the materials with which theology deals are open to scientific, anthropological and historical studies, but not the Uebergeschichtliche in the Christian faith.¹ Theological knowledge is unique in that it is able to discern the suprahistorical fact within the historically-given experience, as the latter works upon our inner life. The object of theological study is God in Christ, i.e., God in His revelation for the salvation of men.² An historical study can therefore only become theology when all the works of God are viewed in relation to the revelation in Christ. Kähler affirmed the finality of the revelation in Christ.

The Christian theologian has no need and he has no right to make use of some reflective basis as a starting point

1. Ibid, p. 24. "Der Historicismus verläuft in Skepsis gegen das Uebergeschichtliche und bleibt die Lösung der eigentlich theologischen Aufgabe schuldig."

2. Ibid, p. 26.

for theology. Although God does not offer Himself immediately to the scientific observer, we are not justified in taking refuge in some metaphysical idea which stands above the antitheses of the experiential world.¹ God reveals Himself in the immediacy of justifying faith. Salvation and revelation are coordinate in experience: "Die Heilsgewissheit des Gerechtfertigten ist die vollkommene Gestalt der religiösen Gewissheit."²

God is to be distinguished as a 'third' outside ourselves and the world. In His personality, He is distinguished from the totality of material things, or from an absolutism of thought; in His independence, He is in antithesis to the infinite sequences of conditioned existence; in His oneness, He is separated from the infinite possibilities of differentiated being.³ Pantheism and deism are postulates of religiosity or ethics, originating in a desire to provide an hypostasis for an unifying scientific view of reality. Eventually, pantheism and deism tend to become interfused with one another to form an idealism. The latter again may issue in atheism, scepticism or sensual monism (materialism).⁴ If theology presumes to make the content of the consciousness of God perspicuous to all, it is likewise in danger of

1. Ibid, p. 150.
2. Ibid, p. 155f.

3. Ibid, p. 157f.
4. Ibid, p. 160.

betraying itself into pantheism or deism. ¹

God is the utterly Unique, Who proclaims Himself. God makes Himself present in our inner being, that is the first term of religious experience. No man really seeks after God until God has first given him unmistakable evidence of His presence to him in an historically mediated experience. The full mutual relation between man and God involves the joint action of an inner experience of God with the general experience of God in history. ² Revelation is neither mystical nor ahistorical.

Kähler directed a strong attack upon the 'historical Jesus' of liberal Protestantism. He made a sharp distinction between the historische Jesus and the geschichtliche Christ, a distinction which plays a crucial role in present-day German theology. The historische Jesus was the Jesus of historicism, the figure whose biography could be written like that of any other man, through the aid of general historical science. The geschichtliche, or Biblical, Christ has both a natural historical and a Divine history; and a history thus qualified by the suprahistorical, is not amenable to the principles of scientific historical research.

1. Loc. cit.
2. Ibid., p. 167.

Kähler was concerned to present to men the Biblical Christ and not the ideal Christ, nor even the Christ of dogma. The Gospel writers were not providing source-material for a biography of Jesus. ¹ The Gospel, like all revelation, is, in its presentation of Divine events, the object of faith. What the men of the Bible understood by revelation was the living Word, the life-giving, self-proclamation of the living God. ² It is Kähler's protest that, "Der historische Jesus der modernen Schriftsteller verdeckt uns den lebendigen Christus."³ The Christ of dogma may also be a rational caricature of the real Christ. The most learned theologian holds no advantage over the simplest Christian in relation to the Christ in whom one must believe.

Der wirkliche Christus ist der gepredigte Christus.
Der gepredigte Christus, das ist aber eben der
gegläubte. ⁴

The preaching of Christ, whereby He is made the object of faith, takes place in the Church. Christianity cannot be freed from history and its conditions. Kähler would hold together in tension the sphere of the transcendent and the immanent. In keeping with this principle he finds that in the New Testament the Person and the work of Christ are

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1. Kähler, Der sogenannte historische Jesus, p. 23.
 2. Ibid, p. 34.
 3. Ibid, p. 44.
 4. Ibid, p. 66.

understood together. "Sein Werk ist seine Person in ihrer geschichtlich-übergeschichtlichen Wirkung." ¹

Kähler unites the doctrine of Providence with soteriology:

Für das christliche Denken gibt es keine Möglichkeit, einen Ratschluss Gottes über die Welt an und für sich von dem Ratschluss über das Heil sachlich zu unterscheiden. ²

God's creation, and His preservation, of the world is mediated through His Word, i.e., God Himself, in His love, is active in the world. The Christian knows that he is an immediate object of the Divine action, upon which his life is dependent, and in relation to which he has only a conditioned independence. ³ He does not look upon the constant creative act of God pantheistically, as the mere exercise of power, but he perceives the loving purpose of God, with his personal experience. ⁴

Kähler provides a fitting climax to the study of our period, with his protest against the predominant theological outlook of his own century, and with the pointer which his thought provides toward present trends in theology. The parallels with Barth which one cannot fail to discern in his Biblically and Christologically centred theology, fail, however, at the point where Kähler discusses the imago dei. Kähler

1. Ibid, p. 94.

2. Die Wissenschaft der christlichen Lehre, p. 229.

3. Ibid, p. 252.

4. Ibid, p. 253.

believes that the Divine plan of salvation and the plan of creation, or world development, fall together in one. ¹ The Redeemer and the redeemed are not radically unlike:

Der Heilsrat hat seinen mittlerischen Gegenstand an dem Menschensohn, in dem sich Gott als Person offenbart. Also ist das ganze Menschenleben gottartig und die sinnenfällige Leibhaftigkeit unserer Persönlichkeit bedingt die Ebenbildlichkeit mit. ²

1. Ibid, p. 259. "Ist der Heilsrat der Schöpfungsplan, so fällt auch die Weltentwicklung mit der Heilsgeschichte zusammen."

2. Ibid, p. 261 and ff.

C O N C L U S I O N

In the theological systems which we have passed in review, we have discovered a prevailing immanent outlook, broken only by counter trends which were little more than protests in relation to the broad movements in theology. We have, admittedly, ignored large areas of theological activity in the nineteenth century, the mediating, conservative, and liturgical elements. But it may be reasonably argued that the 'liberal' theology of the last century bore the mantle of theological leadership, and conferred upon subsequent theology the chief heritage of the theological reflection in what H.R. Mackintosh¹ has termed, the greatest century in theology since the fourth.

The extent to which immanentism was a product of the general climate of thought in the nineteenth century, it would be difficult to assess. Political liberalism, scientific naturalism, and developing socialism, all played a part toward inducing a 'this-worldly' outlook upon life. While the theology which we have studied made its contribution to the total outlook, we have seen ample evidence of the fact that theology made a great effort to accommodate itself to the temper of the age. It would be an interesting study in itself

1. Types of Modern Theology, p. 190.

to investigate the interrelation of this great period of theological study with its social and cultural milieu. The more important work of theology remains, however, the examination of its own sources and history.

We have discerned two principal streams of thought in nineteenth century theology: the idealistic on the one hand, and the positive and historical on the other. Both had their roots in Kantian epistemology and were influenced by romanticist individualism. The individual and his humanly-conditioned experience, whether interpreted rationally or empirically, became normative for truth. The Christian view of Divine revelation was subjugated to the limits of man's empirical or ratiocinative experience. God was either made the all-inclusive term of a system or the 'limit' of experience.

In idealism, the tendency was unmistakably in the direction of pantheism. When God is made an absolute, the negative of distinction, He loses that distinctiveness which constitutes transcendence, and remains necessary to the system just so long as it suits the thinker to retain an 'ideal' background of experience. In Strauss, Feuerbach and Marx, the ideal gave way to naturalism and atheistic materialism.

The experiential and historical approach to the religious life tended to exclude the being of God Himself from the positive search for knowledge. No field of experience was

left as the peculiar sphere of Divine revelation and action. The whole of experience was leased out to the special sciences; and theology lost its unique claim to truth. Schleiermacher's subjective approach to religion suffered at the hands of the psychologists of religion, who could interpret all psychical phenomena in terms of natural cause and effect. Ritschl's claim for a circumscribed historical sphere of empirically discernible revelation, the Kingdom of God, could not long hold out against the claims of historicism to bring the whole of historical experience under the survey of universal positivistic norms. With Troeltsch there remained only an optimistic faith in the progress of relative value within natural process.

The theology of the present century has been disillusioned by the naturalistic issue of the older liberal theology. Since the theology of Karl Barth first made its influence felt, there has been a widespread return to a transcendental view of God and to the use of such terminology as, revelation, miracle, Creator, and holy.

We cannot here enter into a discussion of contemporary theology. The aim of our study has been to perform the limited service of investigating the background of current theology, against which perspective, we may see the present in clearer outline. One observation we may make is that the revived

transcendentalism of our time has by no means returned to a scholastic construction of the relations between God and the world. It lives in the post-Kantian era. There is a revived claim for the legitimacy of a theological metaphysic in some quarters,¹ but for the most part theology steers clear of systematic metaphysical support.

The theology of Karl Barth has moved on from its sterner paradoxes and dialectical disjunctions of earlier days to become more adequately a theology of the Word of God. His theology does not consist merely of a protest against the immanentism of the last century but has entered into the problems of historic theology in massive detail.²

The revival of a Biblical theology, which is by no means confined to Barth and to his coadjutors, is more than a redirection of theological forces; it is a recovery of faith. The Church has been reminded again of its true sources. There must be a point at which theology is declared no longer Christian

1. See Cherbonnier, "Biblische Metaphysic and Christian Theology." *Theology Today*. Vol. IX, No. 3. October 1952.

2. In discussion with the writer, Barth insisted that he is not in reaction against nineteenth century immanentism, but that he is seeking to go forward to a more adequate statement of the problem, in terms of the theology of the Word of God.

He volunteered further, that he is not opposed to belief in God's immanence, as such, but to the allgemein view of immanence.

if it cuts itself off from its own distinctive origins, as they are mediated through the Biblical record. We who bear the name of Christ must constantly be recalled to the transcendent events, upon the plane of history, which we claim as the basis of our faith.

It is precisely from the perspective of faith that the 'problem' of the relations of God to man and to the world must be solved. The concepts, immanence and transcendence, which are the currency of philosophical discourse, may very well be a hindrance to the Christian view of God in spite of the fact that a theologian cannot well avoid them when entering into an Auseinanderzetzung with other forms of thought. When either term is used, it is assumed that there is something over against God which is, or, may be, resistant to Him, a limitation upon His will or power -- or, to the concept of God which the thinker has first formulated for himself. Too often these concepts are found indispensable because the theologian has previously accepted a scientific or philosophical world-view, other than the Christian, to which he feels obliged to adapt the Christian view of God.

The Christian view of God properly regards Him as the Creator of the Universe, Who remains sovereignly in control of His creation. The problem of how God maintains creative control of His universe is of a different order than the

philosophical problem of freedom, or the scientific concept of law. The Biblical view of God represents Him as acting through free determinations of His will, by election, and by His eternal purpose to bring about a final consummation of His power and glory. All life and history is under the providential care of God. The Biblical antitheses are not of the order of, transcendent: immanent, but, Creator: creature, Lord: disciple, and spirit: flesh. These polarities are of a spiritual and moral character rather than theoretic or metaphysical.

It is true that theology has a responsibility to interpret, in so far as it can, the Christian view of God and the world -- and in terms that are meaningful to men. But the theologian must remember that where God has left a veil between His action and our knowledge we must not substitute a mediating theory. We can only speak, as Christians, of that event or that thought in which we have recognized God in His self-disclosure. Mediation represents a move toward deism. It is not always transcendentalism which is deistic. A transcendental view of God, combined with a view of immediacy in revelation and providence, should not be described as deistic.

The Biblical expressions concerning God's intimate fatherly rule of the world, particularly in the Old Testament, may appear to be based upon a naive world-view, and to be

scientifically untenable. But, basically, these assertions about God's actions are expressions of a living faith which has experienced the nearness of an Holy God, e.g., (Isa. 57: 15. R.S.V.) :

"For thus says the high and lofty One
 who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:
 I dwell in the high and holy place,
 and also with him who is of a contrite
 and humble spirit."

The central dogma of the Christian faith concern the link which God has established between the temporal and the eternal. Divine mediation is centred at the heart of the Gospel. In the New Testament, the Divine and the human meet together in faith. Men of faith do not doubt that the things seen are determined by the unseen (Heb. 11: 3). Faith lives in the confidence that present imperfect knowledge will give place to full understanding (I Cor. 13: 12), and that there will come a day when "God may be everything to every one."
 (I Cor. 15: 28. R.S.V.).

T H E E N D

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