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THE THEME OF POWER IN THE THEOLOGY OF ADOLF VON HARNACK

JANET MARY BIGLAND-PRITCHARD

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
University of Durham, Department of Theology, 1990.

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25 JUN 1991

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ABSTRACT

Harnack is best known as a church historian of the first rank, but a case can also be made for his significance as a constructive theologian. This thesis sets out to examine his theology using an interpretive framework not employed before, namely, the theme of power which runs throughout his work. Use is made of the sociological typology of power developed by Dennis Wrong on the basis of Weber, of Michael Mann's work on the origins of social power, and of Peter Berger's classification of various theological approaches to secularisation and religious pluralism.

The investigation broadens the base of Harnack research by making fuller use than has generally the case of publications other than Das Wesen and Dogmengeschichte, and pays attention to Harnack's devotional as well as his scholarly writing.

The theory of power which emerges is strongly dualistic, distinguishing interior, ideological power from external, social power. Divine power empowers individuals from within, via their acceptance of the charismatic and competent authority of Jesus as legitimate authority, and the concomitant attribution of benign, nutrient power to the character of God. This acceptance produces markedly beneficial effects upon the individual's emotional and moral state, which gives rise to constructive activity in the external world. Inherent in this theory is a high estimate of the empowering possibilities of ideas and personalities. Harnack argues that the early church underwent a regrettable process ('transpotentiation'), involving the the growth of external, coercive authority and a diminution in the availability of interior, divine/spiritual power.

Harnack's work contains serious tensions related to its untenable dualism and its ambivalence about the possibility of legitimate external authority in the church. But his explanation of divine/spiritual empowering provided a plausible, attractive theodicy and apologetic in its time. With modifications it could do so again, and is of especial value in developing an existential theology of the inner life.

This thesis is dedicated to my son
John Francis, without whose ebullient
and delightful presence in the world
it would have been finished sooner.

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PREFACE

I wish to express my deep indebtedness to the many people who in a variety of ways have enabled this thesis to be written.

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Though gratefully surrounded by 'so great a cloud of witnesses', it need hardly be said that the responsibility for the thesis and its inadequacies remains my own.

THE THEME OF POWER IN THE THEOLOGY OF ADOLF VON HARNACK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>CHAPTER ONE; INTRODUCTION.</u>	1
1. a. Biography.....	1
1. b. Methodology and selection of texts.....	4
1. c. Harnack as systematic theologian: the state of the research...	9
1. d. Harnack as apologist and reformer.....	25
1. e. Power as a principle of coherence for the interpretation of Harnack.....	36
NOTES to chapter one.....	41
 <u>CHAPTER TWO: QUESTIONS AND DEFINITIONS.</u>	 47
2. a. Introduction.....	47
2. b. Perspectives from the social sciences: Wrong, Mann, Berger....	48
2. c. Historical context to Harnack's concern with power.....	55
2. d. Harnack's hesitancies in addressing the nature of divine power	58
2. e. Power terms in Harnack's usage.....	60
2. f. Selecting the appropriate questions.....	65
NOTES to chapter two.....	68

Table of contents p.2

<u>CHAPTER THREE: THE POWER OF GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD.</u>	70
3. a. Affirming the power of God in the modern situation.....	70
1. Evidence of Harnack's inductive approach.....	70
ii. The iron ring: limitations on the sources for evidence of divine power.....	72
iii. The evidence for divine power is there, in history and in personality.....	73
iv. Jesus the supreme evidence of divine/spiritual power at work in the world.....	76
v. The opposition to divine/spiritual power.....	77
vi. The inwardness of divine/spiritual power.....	78
3. b. How divine energy energises the human.....	82
1. Introduction.....	82
ii. The power of ideas.....	84
iii. The power of personality.....	88
iv. Evaluation.....	90
NOTES to chapter three.....	91
<u>CHAPTER FOUR: THE DIVINE POWER ENERGISES THE HUMAN THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.</u>	92
4. a. Introduction.....	92
4. b. The person of Christ: who is Jesus?.....	92
4. c. The work of Christ: redemption.....	97
1. Introduction.....	97
ii. 'Christus als Erlöser'.....	98
iii. Insights from <u>Dogmengeschichte</u>	106
iv. Strength made perfect in weakness: Harnack's theologia crucis.....	111
4. d. Summary and further observations.....	113
<u>CHAPTER FIVE: MISUNDERSTANDING DIVINE POWER: MIRACLES, ESCHATOLOGY, SACRAMENTS.</u>	116
5. a. Introduction.....	116
5. b. Ecstasy, enthusiasm and miracles in the early church.....	118
5. c. Eschatology and mysticism.....	123
5. d. Sacraments and the concept of grace.....	127
5. e. Summary and further observations.....	130

Table of contents p.3

<u>CHAPTER SIX: DIVINE AND HUMAN POWERS AT WORK IN THE CHURCH.</u>	132
6. a. Introduction.....	132
6. b. The theme of transpotentiation.....	132
i. The theory in general terms.....	132
ii. Factors in the transpotentiation of Christianity.....	135
iii. Protest and reaction against the transpotentiation of Christianity.....	138
iv. Transpotentiation after Nicaea.....	140
v. 'Pleas in mitigation'.....	141
vi. The root cause of transpotentiation.....	142
6. c. Authority.....	145
6. d. The reformation solution to the problem of transpotentiation..	149
6. e. Summary and further observations.....	151
<u>CHAPTER SEVEN: HARNACK'S CONTRIBUTION TO A THEOLOGY OF POWER.</u>	154
7. a. Introduction: Harnack's power theology.....	154
7. b. Analysis of Harnack's system.....	155
7. c. Difficulties in Harnack's approach.....	159
i. Problems with the inductive strategy.....	159
ii. The dualism of internal and external power.....	161
iii. The possibility of a legitimate external authority for Christianity.....	163
iv. The authority of the historical theologian.....	166
v. Harnack's concept of history.....	168
vi. Harnack's treatment of miracles, eschatology and sacraments.	169
vii. Integrating the historical Jesus with absolute religion....	171
viii. The place of the cross in Harnack's system.....	173
ix. The category of holy mystery.....	174
x. Unchallenged assumptions in Harnack's work.....	175
xi. The causal roles of ideas and personality.....	175
xii. The possibility of a religious significance for the church..	176
7. d. The merits of Harnack's system.....	177
7. e. Harnack as a starting-point for a contemporary theology of power.....	178
Postscript: Directions for further Harnack research.....	181
NOTES to chapter seven.....	182
<u>BIBLIOGRAPHY.</u>	183

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

(For full bibliographical information, see Bibliography, pp. 182f)

Harnack's works

Const. & Law Constitution and Law of the Church in the first two centuries

DW Das Wesen des Christentums

HD History of Dogma [ET of LD]

LD Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte

Marcion Marcion: das Evangelium vom Fremden Gott

M&A Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums...

M&E The Mission and Expansion of Christianity... [ET of M&A]

R&A Reden und Aufsätze: bd I. Band I
bd. II. Band II
nf. 1, 2 Neue Folge 1&2, (Aus Wissenschaft und Leben)
nf. 3. Neue Folge 3, (Aus der Friedens- und Kriegsarbeit)
nf. 4. Neue Folge 4, (Erforschetes und Erlebtes)
Werk. Aus der Werkstatt des Vollendeten

ST A Scholar's Testament [ET of VIL]

VIL Vom inwendigen Leben

WC? What is Christianity? [ET of DW]

Other works, etc.

AZH Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, Adolf von Harnack (biography)

SMEND Friedrich Smend, Adolf von Harnack: Verzeichnis seiner Schriften,

ET English translation

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.a. Biography

Carl Gustav Adolf Harnack was born on 7 May, 1851 in Dorpat (Tartu), an outpost of German culture in the Livonian part of Estonia. He was the son of orthodox Lutheran theologian Theodosius Harnack, best known for his major work on Luther¹. The bulk of Adolf's schooldays was spent in Erlangen, but the family eventually returned to Dorpat, where he entered the university to read theology, distinguishing himself in church history. From his uncle and professor Moritz von Engelhardt, Harnack learned his rigorous method of textual criticism and the investigation of source documents². In 1872 Harnack moved to Leipzig, habilitating in church history in 1874. It was during the Leipzig years that the theological position crystallised which Harnack would spend the rest of his life developing and defending. With friends Kaftan, Schürer, von Gebhardt, Baudissin and others, he studied, corresponded with and in large measure came to identify with Albrecht Ritschl, which led to a painful rift with both his uncle and his father [AZH p.106]³. The foundation of Harnack's method was attention to the original documents, and during the Leipzig period he set to work, with von Gebhardt, assembling and editing texts. The pair discovered Codex Rossanensis while working in Italy, and they began the Texte und Untersuchungen series [ibid. pp.81f]. With von Gebhardt and Zahn, Harnack began what would be a lifelong interest with the editing of the Patrum Apostolicum Opera, and with Schürer he founded the Theologische Literaturzeitung, which became the journalistic organ of the Ritschlian school [ibid. p.83].

In 1879 Harnack accepted a call to Giessen as an ordinarius professor, and was a key figure in turning the tiny, ailing faculty into a going concern. Das Mönchtum, seine Ideale und seine Geschichte was published in 1881, followed by Martin Luther in seiner Bedeutung für die Geschichte der Wissenschaft und Bildung in 1883, both to acclaim. But the most important event of the Giessen period was the publication in 1885 of the first volume of the Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, in which Harnack clearly declared his Ritschlian position and which gave rise to the first of the Harnackschen Fälle, making him a permanent outcast from orthodox theological circles [AZH pp.134f; Glick, Reality, p.53].

In 1886 Harnack accepted a call to Marburg, and after two years there he was called to Berlin. Despite the unanimity of the university faculty concerning his call, the ecclesiastical powers in the form of the Evangelische Oberkirchenrat, made suspicious and hostile by the Dogmengeshichte, strenuously opposed his appointment for nine tumultuous months until September 1888, when the new Kaiser Wilhelm II decided in Harnack's favour [AZH pp.156-172].

Further controversy ensued in 1892 with the Apostolikumstreit [AZH pp.193f], in which Harnack made clear some practical ramifications of his approach to dogma. Christoph Schrenpf, a young clergyman, conducted a baptism without using the Apostles' Creed and as a result was disciplined by his superiors. Following this a delegation of students asked Harnack to advise them as to petitioning the Evangelische Oberkirchenrat for an end to

the mandatory subscription to the Apostles' Creed by the clergy and to its use in public worship. His reply, which he published, strongly advised against such a course of political action [AZH pp.200f], but sympathised with the student's views. While honouring the creed for its religious value and venerable antiquity, he maintained that in its literal sense it created stumbling-blocks for many sincere Christians (the chief of which concerned the virgin birth), and suggested that this creed be supplemented or replaced by a short creed which would express more clearly the understanding of the gospel won through the Reformation and the subsequent centuries. He was challenged to provide this creed, but declined, saying, „Ich bin kein Reformator“ [AZH p.212]⁴.

Harnack held the chair of church history at Berlin until 1923 [AZH p.522]. He served as Rektor of the university, and his academic interests and activities were of the widest variety. The Smend bibliography lists over sixteen hundred publications during his lifetime⁵. By far the best known was Das Wesen des Christentums, which first appeared in 1900, saw sixteen editions before 1927, and was widely translated. The publication of Das Wesen greatly extended Harnack's reputation, but also incited another storm of controversy. Numerous books and articles appeared in reply, ranging from the erudite (e.g. Loisy, Cremer) to the vitriolic—one was entitled, 'Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?' [AZH p.245].

Glick lists eight theological battles in which Harnack was involved—the publication of Dogmengeschichte, the appointment to Berlin, the Apostolikumstreit, the publication of Das Wesen, the 'Babel-Bibel' issue (1903), the Jatho affair (1909), the publication of Marcion (1921), and the emergence of 'dialectical theology' (1923) [Reality, p.17]⁶. As a result, the rejection of Harnack by the ecclesiastical authorities was so complete that they refused to allow him to examine his own students [AZH p.299], and even sympathetic colleagues, when he proposed to stand for election as faculty representative for the Brandenburg provincial synod, held the view that his election would be an affront to the synod [AZH p.300].

His church's refusal to recognise Harnack's „...heisser Wunsch, der Kirche zu dienen“ [AZH p.299] caused him pain, but he found other ways to fulfil the responsibility he nonetheless felt to the church. He was involved at an early stage in the establishment of the Evangelisch-Sozial Kongress⁷, in which he played a key role in quoshing the antisemitism introduced by its founder, Adolf Stöcker [AZH p.221]. He also took an interest in foreign missions, and was instrumental in the founding of the Allgemeine Evangelisch-Protestantische Missionsverein in 1884, for work in eastern Asia [ibid. pp.226f]. He had a long-standing ecumenical interest and was enthusiastic in his support of the post-war ecumenical movement⁸.

German culture honoured Harnack more than his church and offered him more scope for activity. Von Zahn-Harnack notes that around the turn of the century Harnack to some extent shifted the field of his work [AZH pp.294-302]. One positive reason for such a shift was that he felt he had a gift for administration and he wanted to use it, to have some impact upon actual conditions rather than remain exclusively in the realm of ideas. The university offered little further scope for this; and developments among the younger theologians, for which Harnack had to some extent paved the way, but which were foreign and repellent to him⁹, were diminishing

his influence [AZH pp.295-298]. The church was closed to him, and yet he could not identify with the kirchliche Liberalismus he met in Berlin, encumbered as he felt it to be with the legacy of 'town-hall free-thought' and the influence of communism [AZH pp.300-301].

But other doors had begun to open. He was elected to the Prussian Academy in 1890, with one exception the first theologian to have been so elected since Schleiermacher and Neander [AZH p.252], and he convinced it to establish the Kirchenvaterkommission, continuing his work of producing quality editions of the earliest Christian writings. It produced 50 volumes over the next 20 years, and took over the complementary production of Texte und Untersuchungen. Harnack also received the commission to produce a history of the Academy for the celebration of its 200th anniversary in 1900 [AZH p.271]. Another opportunity came in 1906 when Harnack was appointed director of the Royal Library [AZH pp.322f].

Harnack was ennobled by the state for his contributions to the cultural life of Germany and, despite his ruler's personal theological conservatism, he enjoyed a ripening, though by no means uncritical, friendship with Kaiser Wilhelm II [AZH p.339-355]¹⁰. His influence at court, theologically and politically, has, however, probably been exaggerated [ibid].

Harnack became odious to the young Karl Barth as a result of his active and uncritical patriotism during the first World War. He was the author of the first half of the Kaiser's proclamation of war to the German people [AZH p.444], and though he had doubts about aspects of the conduct of the war he largely kept them to himself [ibid. p.445]. No pacifist, he was happy for an institute under his control to switch into chemical warfare research [ibid. pp.447, 451]. Against these facts should be set Harnack's considerable efforts in the years preceding 1914 to promote good relations with England with a view to the prevention of a war [see AZH pp.382, 387-391; also 'Bismarck' and 'Deutschland und England' in R&A nf I pp.191-196, 196-203, written 1908] and his practical help during the war for enemy aliens trapped inside Germany [AZH pp.472f]. After the war Harnack supported the Weimar republic, though his defence of the political 'middle' and his refusal to join a party led to some isolation [AZH pp.487, 488]. In 1921 he declined an invitation to become the German ambassador to the United States, preferring to engage in Germany in the reconstruction of academic and social life and to pursue his own theological work [AZH p.506-507].

One of Harnack's lasting contributions to Wissenschaft was the foundation, through his efforts, of the Kaiser Wilhelm Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaften in 1911 (now the Max Planck Institute) [AZH p.420f]. It was designed to meet the need, filled in America by institutes sponsored by big business such as the Carnegie and Rockefeller foundations, for pure research conducted apart from the the distractions of teaching and university life. The Gesellschaft was supported by state funds and private donations, and established research institutes in fields as diverse as psychology, iron and steel production, anthropology and aeronautics. It suffered badly during the war and the revolution, but through the efforts of Harnack and his co-workers it survived. This struggle claimed the last of the old man's strength, and while in Heidelberg on a journey for the inauguration of a new institute, Harnack died at the age of 79.

1.b: Methodology and selection of texts

Harnack's frequent reply to questions about methodology was a terse and impatient, „Methode ist Mutterwitz“ (common-sense!) [AZH p.72]. One is inclined to share his view, but some explanations of the method of this investigation are of course necessary.

This thesis approaches the problem of interpreting Harnack's constructive theology by using a key which has not been tried before—that of treating seriously the language of power which permeates all of Harnack's work. The use of the word key, however, can only be as a loose metaphor. Harnack's work is complex and multi-layered, and it would be facile to suggest that there could be only one correct principle of coherence with which to interpret it. Neufeld suggests one principle [see 1.c. below], and Stephen Neill, reviewing Neufeld, offers another [Journal of Theological Studies, 29 (1978), pp.608-610]. Glick holds that: "Any attempt to interpret Harnack must resist a unilineal pattern...The century was too rich in points of view, and Harnack was too much a man of his century, to declare of him 'Lo here, and lo, there'...One cannot single out a sole feature by which to interpret Harnack" [Glick, Reality p.321]. Yet the examination of the power language and themes in Harnack's works offers significant new vantage-points from which to assess his value. The question of how much store Harnack set on the problem of giving a coherent account of power in Christian history, though not a question he asked himself, is a question well worth putting to the Harnackean corpus. It is a question which needs to be asked in view of Harnack's consistent and ubiquitous use of power language, especially for the description of that in Christian history which was most dear to Harnack and most central to his constructive theology, namely 'the gospel'.

To get to grips with this task requires time and patience and the performance of a good deal of what Harnack termed 'Kärrnerarbeit' [R&A Werk. p.188], for Harnack never wrote a book, or even an explicit chapter, on his understanding of power or his intention in employing power language so freely. One cannot identify the significance of this language at a glance, and even the reading of a 'representative' book will not suffice. Though Harnack unarguably possessed a coherent and consistent theology which conditioned all his work, he never wrote a 'dogmatics'. He wrote church history, and his own constructive thought emerges from within the historical treatments. It shapes their structure, and comes into clear view now and then in brief evaluative sections, in asides, and in his famous essay-length footnotes.

Therefore the appropriate method is an heuristic one, the interrogation of a whole series of these historical texts for features which the author does not explicitly declare. It could be termed phenomenology, or expressed in the sequence 'sift-collate-interpret'. One began by noting and recording each use of power words and phrases, and then proceeded to a vigorous analysis of the context and significance of each statement. The proceeding could not be confined to word study, however, because Harnack often employs power concepts where no explicit power language is used [see section 1.e. below]. Once an entire book had been examined in this way, the analysis proceeded to see if the scattered 'threads' formed

any pattern. Clear patterns did emerge from the first book so analysed, which, with modifications, held good for all subsequent works.

The fact of this consistency appears to be a matter of real significance rather than an artefact of the method of enquiry. Though admittedly I brought my own questions to the investigation—which will be dealt with in chapter two—I did not bring the answers. An inductive method of enquiry, allowing the author first to speak for himself, seemed the best method. The only specific preconception I brought to the work on Harnack was that 'the essence of the gospel' and 'the power of the gospel' were in some form major concerns of his. The shape of those concerns was unknown, and I therefore assume that the patterns which emerged from the analysis of the major books did indeed genuinely emerge from rather than being imposed upon them. The conclusions of the thesis will be the result of a dialogue between my questions and Harnack's patterns.

These patterns hold good for major works written in every period of Harnack's career, which indicates that Harnack's theological understanding maintained a high degree of uniformity and consistency through the years. Neufeld, in his second book on Harnack, tries to use a biographical key to argue that Harnack's point of view on many issues was altered and affected by the theological controversies through which he passed [Neufeld (1979), pp.11-14]. While conceding that Harnack's political and perhaps social views certainly developed over time—so that the friend of the Kaiser could, without annulling that friendship, become a supporter of the Weimar Republic [see F.K. Ringer, The Decline of the German Mandarins: the German Academic Community, 1890-1933, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1969, pp.202-203]—where theology is concerned I agree with Glick that the evidence is in favour of substantial consistency'. He states: "By the beginning of the Giessen years Harnack's position was firmly set. Henceforward there were changes only in the sense of nuances" [Glick, Reality, p.41].

The point is illustrated by the letter to Stinzing, quite rightly a point of departure for many Harnack scholars, in which the seventeen-year-old Harnack outlines a theological concern, method and approach which in all essentials still held good when the venerable Kirchenhistoriker died in his eightieth year. Just before starting university in Dorpat, Harnack wrote to his Erlangen friend Wilhelm Stinzing to explain his choice of subject. He wrote:

"...As you will know, I am going to study theology. I do not know whether you also are one of those who look down on everything that has to do with religion and theology with scorn or indifference. But see Christianity as one will, yes, even as an error; is it not of the greatest interest to trace the history of this error, to see for oneself what earth-shaking events, what revolutions this error has called forth, into what unfamiliar paths it has guided the spirit of the centuries, how it penetrated our entire present civilisation and culture and now is inseparable from it? But further: the longer I live (and how little time do we yet have behind us!) the more I am convinced that all problems and conflicts in the last analysis find their solution in the realm of the religious, and because of this a

Christian viewpoint can never become obsolete. And therefore I am an enthusiastic theologian, for I hope in this discipline to find the way to the solution of the major problems of our life; certainly not the entire solution, but at least the right direction; for well I know that one must begin this way anew daily. I do not desire a profusion of ready-made dogmas, but rather to produce and make my own every single strand in the fabric. Perhaps you are skipping quickly over these lines or perhaps you are at the least surprised at this peculiar way of proceeding; but here among my school-mates I am often compelled to bear witness to my opinion and have thus had the experience that I am always best understood when I have spoken most openly what I feel" [AZH pp.39-40: my translation].

The reputation of theology among the Wissenschaften at the time Harnack wrote the letter was so low that Harnack's election to follow this academic path would have left him open to scorn and disparagement [Neufeld (1979) p.11-12]. Here from the outset is an affirmation of the significance of the individual and the exercise of individual will-power, and of the right to speak out one's deep convictions despite opposition. Here too is the conviction of the supreme significance of Christianity—for the understanding of history and of contemporary culture and civilisation, but ultimately for a more practical reason—that is, for the living of life itself. All things find their root and issue in religion; therefore Harnack's central concern with theological Wissenschaft is not academic but existential, that is, with the finding of a way to a solution of the chief problems of contemporary life. Harnack already sees Christianity as a power, steering the 'spirit of the centuries' into new channels, precipitating world-stirring events, fomenting revolutions, determining and resolving the problems and conflicts of life. He also knew it to be a power which could not be experienced second-hand through ready-made credal utterances, but which in each aspect had to be made one's own. These themes recur in writings from every period of Harnack's career². Thus one cannot easily argue for the existence of an 'early' and a 'mature' Harnack as one can for an 'early' and a 'later' Luther. The same voice speaks throughout, and with the same message.

Harnack's consistency also establishes the validity of employing texts from every period of his academic career with a sense of their equal significance and without the need to impose caveats on their interpretation in terms of their place in stages of the author's development. Das Wesen of course must hold a special claim on our attention because most readers, rightly or wrongly, identify this book as being the quintessential Harnack, and indeed it was this book that Harnack himself chose when he and the author Gerhardt Hauptmann agreed to send each other the work which each considered his best [AZH p.434-435]. For many it is the only work of Harnack's that is read. Similarly in his own day the book had an unprecedented impact. It was widely reprinted and translated: a field edition was even issued to the German troops in the First World War [Smend's bibliography lists for Das Wesen: „12 Druck 63 Tsd. Ausgabe fürs Feld in 2 Heften, 1915“: Smend no.1199]. Why this set of lectures became a popular best-seller had much to do with its own merits, and also with the intellectual/historical context in which it appeared³. The book's historical impact makes it an obvious starting-place, as does

the fact that it treats the theme of the essence of Christianity more boldly and starkly than the longer works, where this theme is woven and submerged into a larger and fuller historical reconstruction.

A mistake, however, which has often been made in assessing the value of Harnack's work has been that of limiting the discussion to one or two books—usually to Das Wesen and Dogmengeschichte with possibly a nod in the direction of a few others. It is a contention of this thesis that only a much fuller reading of Harnack will do him justice, and such a reading does much to obviate many common criticisms. But with a corpus of over 1600 works, the need to select is clear. The more technical patristic writings, such as contributions in the Texte und Untersuchungen series, have been given less attention, as have reports of such bodies as the Evangelish-Sozial Kongress and the Kaiser Wilhelm Gesellschaft. Newspaper articles generally have been omitted: their existence serves, however, to remind us that Harnack was read outside of academic circles. For instance, he produced for years an annual Christmas editorial (e.g. 'Weihnachten', 1919, Smend no.1294): but these contributions add little that is new to our understanding of his thought.

While many of Harnack's works were read in the course of the investigation [see bibliography], detailed analysis has been confined to Das Wesen, Dogmengeschichte, Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten, Marcion, and the collected essays, entitled Reden und Aufsätze. Attention has also been paid to a collection of Harnack's devotional meditations, Vom inwendigen Leben, published after his death.

Between them, the four books cover nearly all of Harnack's career: Dogmengeschichte began to appear in 1885. Das Wesen was published at the turn of the century, Mission und Ausbreitung's first edition was dated 1902, with a second edition (upon which the best-known English version is based) in 1906 and further editions in 1915 and 1924. Marcion appeared in 1921. A sequel, Neue Studien zu Marcion [Leipzig, Hinrichs], was published in 1923, and an article in Reden und Aufsätze entitled 'Die Neuheit des Evangeliums nach Marcion' [R&A Werk pp.128-143] extends Harnack's treatment of the subject to 1929, the year before his death. By its very nature, Reden und Aufsätze covers all periods.

Each of the four books was a work of major academic stature: all in their time functioned as standard reference works. Most importantly for this investigation, each of the four books has 'the gospel' and 'the essence of the gospel' as a central theme. Harnack's presentation of Marcion is especially telling: here the faceless early heretic comes alive as a genius obsessed with the sheer novelty and the overwhelming power of the gospel. Harnack uses Marcion's famous statement about the gospel as a frontispiece to the book:

"O Wunder über Wunder, Verzückung, Macht und Staunen ist, dass man gar nichts über das Evangelium sagen, noch über dasselbe denken, noch es mit irgend etwas vergleichen kann" [prologue to Marcion's 'Antitheses', quoted as frontispiece to Marcion and p.81].

Such a statement is clearly one which Harnack in no small measure adopts for himself—hence the book's importance not merely as a work of patristic scholarship but also as an authorial self-revelation.

The case for using Das Wesen has already been made. The Dogmengeschichte similarly, though less obviously, is vital to our enquiry. The first half of the work appeared in 1885, when Harnack was thirty-four and a rising ordinarius professor at Giessen. Though he had already appeared in print, mainly on patristic subjects, the Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte was his first major work of more general theological interest. It was the book that made Harnack's name and notoriety, and has the significance of an opening move in his theological career [see Neufeld (1979), pp.58, 82ff]. History of Dogma stretches to seven volumes in the English translation, and though its primary subject—the development of Christian dogma from the preaching of Jesus to the reformation—is at one remove from our topic for a large proportion of those seven volumes, the manner in which Harnack presents the preaching of Jesus and assesses the fidelity or departure from that standard of each dogmatic development furnishes us with valuable evidence.

Mission und Ausbreitung covers a portion of the same period as Dogmengeschichte, i.e. the first three centuries of Christianity, but from the point of view of Christian missions. What interests us here is not so much the actual spread of Christianity as Harnack's conception of the message of the apostolic and missionary preaching. Also of value is his delineation of the social, religious and intellectual milieu of the ancient world into which the Christian preaching came. Such church history of necessity, because of the large gaps in the material and the distance in time, tells us as much about the author's convictions and viewpoint as about the historical events discussed, and thus it becomes a useful source for assessing Harnack's constructive theology.

Marcion's importance has already been discussed. Its later date also gives it a special value, as most assessments of Harnack are based on materials dating from the earlier parts of his career. Harnack's work on Marcion, if one includes the two updates mentioned above, takes us to 1929. Marcion appears to be the least studied of all Harnack's major books, a circumstance which cannot be fully explained by the fact that it has never been translated into English.

The Reden und Aufsätze are useful in a different way. While many of the entries are church-historical vignettes, a sizeable proportion deal either with specific theological topics rather than historical periods or address present-day issues. These provide a more direct statement of Harnack's own theological, social and political points of view and thus constitute a valuable supplement to the major works⁴.

The investigation was conducted in English and German. The first book studied, What is Christianity?/Das Wesen des Christentums, was read exhaustively in both languages. Harnack's simple, elegant style renders him more accessible to those for whom German is a second language than many authors, but as the work continued, my confidence in the fidelity of the English translations increased to the point where I made the decision, in the interests of speed, to use English translations where available,

while checking against the original for important words, phrases and key passages. In the case of History of Dogma this has meant using the third, rather than the untranslated fourth edition: Harnack's preface to the fourth edition rightly asserts that little of significance for our purposes has been altered or added. Harnack's latest responses to critics, which are of significance, occur in the preface to the fourth edition, and have been studied. The Reden and Aufsätze as a body have never been translated.

1.c: Harnack as systematic theologian: the state of the research

Harnack was not, it is plain, a systematic theologian in the usual sense of the word, nor did he take the writing of systematic or dogmatic theology with the customary seriousness: he proposed in a lecture in 1894 the following outline for anyone wishing to write a dogmatic theology—Part One; the Teachings of Jesus and the Apostolic Interpretation of them, and Part Two; Mysteries (in which the author could speculate as much as he wished!) [Wilhelm Pauck, Harnack and Troeltsch, Two Historical Theologians, New York/Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1968. p.36 n.58]. Harnack once commented to Barth that if he had to write a 'dogmatics', he would entitle it 'The Life of God's Children', substituting personal confession for the traditional kind of dogmatic theology [reported in *ibid*, p.36].

Because the idea of an ordered system of theological knowledge apparently has its origin not in religion but in philosophy, it would not necessarily appeal to Harnack. The Christian thinkers he prized most highly—Luther, Augustine and Marcion for instance—were not 'systematic' [Meijering (1978) p.53-54]. But while Harnack, in the interests of historical veracity, was rightly sceptical of all-embracing interpretive systems, he also recognised the dangers of the opposite extreme, the Fachspezialismus which denies as unfounded any attempt at an overall concept [*ibid*. p.62f].

One can use the words 'systematic theologian' of Harnack only in the sense that he believed in the value of a Gesamtkonzeption for the narration of history and the illumination of what in the past is of value for the future. He disliked ponderous tomes of 'Dogmatik', and abhorred the practice of arranging them under particular 'loci' or subject-headings, with little attention to how dogmas arose and how they were shaped by the streams of time. Throughout his many historical works Harnack's Gesamtkonzeption is nonetheless plainly visible, and lends coherence to his analysis of the Christian centuries. He has indeed been criticised for imposing structure upon history in this way, and doubt has been cast for this reason upon the reliability of his history as history. But approaching history with a clear point of view need not be seen as a problem. One may agree with Meijering that the fact that Harnack's representation of the history of dogma continually expresses his own theological position does make his work, like that of the dogmatists themselves, dateable, but this datability should be seen as an asset, for through it Harnack takes his own place in the history of dogma [Meijering (1978) pp.62-63]. The point is well made: both those who write dogmatics and those who place them in an historical context have their Gesamtkonzeptionen operating more or less overtly. The object of this

thesis is to build up an accurate portrait of Harnack's Gesamtkonzeption and begin to assess its value. His concern as a church historian was constructive rather than antiquarian. He desired to present a connected story for the sake of its continuing meaning in the present. Because of this Harnack may with justice be seen as a systematic theologian despite his lack of 'system', and the results of his constructive activity deserve attention. The survey of the literature which follows focusses primarily on those works which at least to some extent concern themselves with this aspect of Harnack's endeavour.

Each of the controversies which Harnack's work sparked off generated a host of writings both critical and defensive, and some of these have proved to be of lasting value. The Apostolikumsstreit, for instance, elicited Cremer's first response, and the massive controversy which arose from the publication of What is Christianity? was responsible, directly or indirectly, for the important contributions of Loisy and Sohm. Harnack's contemporary critics have been well discussed: Neufeld and Sykes especially offer valuable treatments, and it is unnecessary to cover the same ground. Only the most important results for our investigation will be indicated.

Cremer [Warum können wir das Apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis nicht aufgeben?, 1893, A Reply to Harnack on the Essence of Christianity, 3rd ed. 1903] puts the educated orthodox case against Harnack and is among the first to level the charge of reductionism. He poses the fundamental question: were a reduction of the total material which may be called Christian indeed justified, on the basis of what criteria would one make the reduction?

Loisy, [L'Evangile et l'Eglise, Paris, 1902] while sharing Harnack's perspective with regard to the need for a restructuring of Christianity to bring it back in line with its original aims, also argues against a critical reduction in favour of a 'whole Christianity' approach. S.W. Sykes points out, in his discussion of the Harnack-Loisy debate, that the charge of reductionism may fit Harnack less well than is usually imagined [The Identity of Christianity: Theologians and the Essence of Christianity from Schleiermacher to Barth, London, 1984, pp.135-138]. Loisy, like most protagonists of a 'whole Christianity' view, ignores the fact that the totality of things which may be termed 'Christian' is incapable of expression, for in even attempting to express it the speaker consciously or unconsciously selects and reduces the available material according to predetermined criteria of selection.

Troeltsch [The Absoluteness of Christianity, 1902; 'Was heisst „Wesen des Christentums“?' in Gesammelte Schriften, Tübingen, 1913; etc.] echoes Loisy's and Cremer's convictions about the impossibility of determining any legitimate criteria for the reduction of Christianity to its original essence, but the criticism comes out of a vastly different theological perspective. He treats as naive idealism Harnack's assertion that Christianity is not one religion among many or even the highest religion, but 'religion itself', and calls for an end to the dogma of Christianity's normativeness accredited and recognisable on the basis of divine authority and miracle [Sykes, Identity, pp.152, 153]. 'The essence of Christianity' for Troeltsch is something which changes from age to age, for Christianity is

age to age, for Christianity is always changing emphases and incorporating new material from its interaction with culture [ibid. p.159]. Where Harnack still struggles to assert the 'objectivity' of the historian while contending for the right of historians to exercise the 'royal judging function' with regard to the selection and weighting of what history to present, Troeltsch faces more squarely the inescapable subjectivism of any treatment of history [ibid. p.163].

Sohm [Kirchenrecht, Leipzig, 1892; Wesen und Ursprung des Katholizismus, 2nd ed., Berlin/Leipzig 1912] is the first critic expressly to take up the issue of power. He argues that in original Christianity 'the Church' was a religious idea entirely separate from any forms of law and coercion: he asserts that the power of the gospel and the power of human authority are antithetical and mutually exclusive, and that subordination in the earliest church was only to the greater spiritual power manifested in recognised charismatic gifts. Harnack's criticism of the increasing rôle of human powers in the history of the church thus is thrown into relief. He will not go as far as Sohm, agreeing with him that the power of the gospel is different from and superior to all human powers, but also arguing for the necessity and even the usefulness of those human powers so long as spiritual power is not eclipsed.

The most famous and influential of Harnack's critics was to be his former pupil, Karl Barth. Barth, beginning with his correspondence with Harnack in 1923, argues against the anthropocentrism of Harnack's approach which is based on the Kantian epistemology he shared with Ritschl. With many elaborations, this remains the hallmark of the neo-orthodox objection to Harnack (see discussion of Rumscheidt below).

The results of careful exploration of Harnack's reception in this country were disappointing. Some of Harnack's books, and especially Das Wesen, were read widely in England and received with joy by modernists in both the Anglican and Free churches, but one is struck, both in his orthodox critics and his modernist supporters, by the shallowness of acquaintance with Harnack's thought and the superficiality of the criticism when compared with his German audience. William Sanday's treatment, [An Examination of Harnack's 'What is Christianity?', London, 1901] is typical in this respect and interesting only in that it underlines the importance of power for Harnack's theological thought in the following way: while criticising Harnack for his lack of christology, Sanday at the same time maintains that there is a christology implicit in his work. He sees it as "...an unconscious protest against the view that the Gospel can be adequately described either as certain new knowledge or as obedience to certain new commandments. There is a personal force at the centre of it, a force which has no parallel in any other religion. The real object of our Christologies is to emphasise this force, and to make sure that it shall not be overlooked..." [ibid. p.15]. T.B. Saunders, who translated some of Harnack's works into English, offers a defensive reply to Sanday in Professor Harnack and his Oxford Critics (London, Williams & Norgate, 1902). Along with T.A. Lacey's Harnack and Loisy (London, Longman's, Green & Co., 1904), it confirms the conclusion arrived at upon reading Sanday that engagement with Harnack's thought at any depth was a low priority in England.

Harnack's prestige reached its zenith around the turn of the century and then gradually declined. Until his death he was a revered theological 'grand old man', but was increasingly marginal to new theological developments. Harnack suffered badly at the hands of popular treatments of his period by Barth, Tillich and others [see Sykes, Identity, p.128, Meijering (1978) pp.62f]. One wonders why the orthodox came down so hard on Harnack's work in view of the fact that he is often astonishingly traditional and 'orthodox'. Meijering suggests two possible reasons, the first being that Harnack's theology was not supranatural, as his stand on the virgin birth and the physical resurrection demonstrates. His second possibility is perhaps nearer the mark: it was the very fact that Harnack's critique of traditional theology was not a radical rejection in favour of some exotic theory, but a nuanced relativising, which made it so hard for the orthodox to take, for the 'half friend' is always much more dangerous than the total enemy [Meijering (1978) p.601.

In spite of widespread and rather hackneyed criticism, there were throughout the years important voices in the wilderness. Bonhoeffer, one of the last of Harnack's students, had planned a rehabilitation of his teacher's work, but his early death left the plan unfulfilled [E. Bethge, Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Theologe, Christ, Zeitgenosse, 2nd ed., München, Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1967, p.946; and see also Bonhoeffer, 'Gedächtnisrede auf Adolf von Harnack' in Gesammelte Schriften (München, 1960) Bd.3 p.59-61]. Bultmann also refused to so lightly dismiss his old teacher [introduction to a 1960 reissue of Das Wesen; see also discussion of R. Hiers below].

From the evaluations of his legacy at the time of his death in 1930 until the centenary of his birth in 1951, little of note was published about Harnack. Then a few short monographs appeared, including the Aland-Elliger-Dibelius 'in memoriam' articles [Berlin, 1951], Philip Rieff's introduction to a reissue of Outlines of the History of Dogma [Boston, 1957], Erich Fascher's provocative monograph Adolf von Harnack: Grösse und Grenze [Berlin, 1962], and Trutz Rendtorff's 'Adolf von Harnack' in Tendenzen der Theologie im 20. Jahrhundert: eine Geschichte in Porträts [Berlin/Stuttgart, 1966]. None of these treatments exceeded 45 pages in length, but they bear witness to a stirring of interest in a half-forgotten name. Fascher suggests that Harnack's influence on Bonhoeffer's theology requires investigation—a project taken up in 1973 by Kaltenborn. Reiff maintains that Harnack's maligned 'neo-protestantism' stands up surprisingly well beside Barth's neo-orthodoxy, and that the question of to whom the future belongs may be more problematic than current estimates allow [introduction to Outlines (unnumbered) p.18].

Glick

The canvas changes dramatically with the appearance of G. Wayne Glick's 359-page work in Jaroslav Pelikan's 'Makers of Modern Theology' series in 1967. (Pelikan himself was a student of Wilhelm Pauck, who was a student of Harnack's [see below]). The Reality of Christianity: A study of Adolf von Harnack as Historian and Theologian [New York/Evanston/London, 1967] signals the beginning of a new era in Harnack scholarship. In the 22 years since then, at least 15 significant treatments of Harnack—8 of which are full-length books of which Harnack forms the sole subject—have

been published. While this can hardly be termed a flood, from Glick onwards Harnack becomes a subject of significant critical interest to theologians, and his book itself must take some of the credit for kindling that interest².

The most important thing about the book is that it was written at all. It is flawed in many ways—by a style which is occasionally sarcastic and journalistic [pp.240,254], by the intrusion of Glick's overtly Barthian commitments, by the 'reductionism' he practises against Harnack's christology [see p.192-198], and by what must be seen as at least sloppiness on several important points. For example, he accuses Harnack of adopting a 'pure essence vs. perversion' model for the history of Christianity, [p.12], which any serious acquaintance with Dogmengeschichte reveals to be a gross caricature of his position. Elsewhere he states that Harnack viewed the inner spiritual experience (the new birth) not as something given but as something everyone can possess as an achievement [p.214,286]. This again is an unjust caricature of Harnack's view, for he everywhere stresses that the source of the new birth is God and that God's fatherly love is an unmerited gift. Glick's grasp of Ritschl seems superficial—all the references to his thought are to secondary sources—and he unjustly describes Ritschl's optimistic appraisal of humanity as scarcely-concealed Couéism [p.52]. Glick also appears occasionally to ignore important evidence. For instance, he summarises Harnack's view of revelation as being the teaching of Jesus which pointed to God but contained no mention of the special relationship of Jesus to God [p.233], in spite of Harnack's very frequent references, in Das Wesen and elsewhere, to Matthew 11:27 and its synoptic parallels: "...no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son...". Glick may not agree with Harnack as to the location of the special relationship between God and Christ in the sphere of deep and intimate knowledge, but he is mistaken when he states that the subject of the special relationship is not raised³.

In spite of these limitations, Glick's book provides a useful introduction for a new generation to Harnack as a constructive thinker and to the standard criticisms levelled against him. Glick endorses Harnack's emphasis on an historical understanding of Christianity [p.332], his identification of the controlling question for the Christian as being existential, i.e. 'how can I become Christ's disciple in the modern world?', his apologetic purpose [pp.66, 67], and his insistence that the gospel judges the world, rather than the reverse. He also makes the point that Harnack's 'mediation' to the church was in the end more successful than he himself was able to see, for many of his views were to be widely adopted after his death [p.327]. Glick's primary points of difference with Harnack concern (in Glick's terms) his acceptance of nature and spirit, or the world and the soul [p.66] rather than God and humanity, as the poles of our theological problem, his 'nisus to essence' procedure, his reductionism [p.326], his anthropocentrism [but see p.304] and the identification of the gospel with his own Humanitätsideal [pp.12-14,74,341]⁴. He accuses Harnack unjustifiably of treating such subjects as christology, the resurrection and the atonement with inconsistency, vagueness and a lack of system [p.288, but see chapters 3-5 below]. Also unwarranted is Glick's

assumption that any unorthodox view of a subject which Harnack evinces has been imposed upon the material from the outside [e.g. pp.112-118].

Glick's work takes our investigation further in a few significant ways. One is an interpretation of Harnack's historical and theological output which places at the centre his lifelong quest to distinguish and articulate the Wesen of Christianity, which Glick translates as 'reality' rather than 'essence'. Frustratingly, when describing this 'reality' Glick quotes Harnack's clearest statements of power themes, but without taking them up [e.g. pp.198-199].

Another advance is Glick's recognition that for Harnack this Wesen cannot be identified with any set of propositional statements. He notes that Harnack's contemporaries complained of his vague, evanescent 'gospel' expressed in too many 'definitions' [pp.144-146]: the conclusion Glick reaches is that the gospel for Harnack is a dynamic principle, a living faith, rather than historically specifiable content or defined doctrine, and though one must always make the attempt, it ultimately defies verbal expression [ibid., pp.146-147].

A third advance is Glick's decisive resolution of the long-standing doubt as to whether Harnack was, as he claimed to be, doing pure, value-free history, or whether his own convictions and value-system—his axiology—coloured and perhaps distorted his presentation of the historical record. Glick exhaustively proves the latter case. Sadly Glick fails to examine at any depth Harnack's motivations for making such a claim ⁵.

Hiers and Pauck

Two short books concerning Harnack appeared the year after Glick (both the poorer for not having read him): R. Hiers' Jesus and Ethics: Four Interpretations [Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1968] and W. Pauck's Harnack and Troeltsch: Two Historical Theologians [New York/Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1968]. Neither book is of great depth and both tend to portray Harnack's view on isolated subjects rather than grasping the underlying constructive vision of the gospel which gives unity and coherence to Harnack's many opinions. The greatest value of Hiers' book for our purpose lies in his pointing out the similarities of conclusion about Jesus and about the essence of Christianity between Harnack and Schweitzer rather than the oft-mentioned differences [pp.72-74], and in making explicit the lines of connexion and development which link Harnack and Bultmann [pp.84-113, 153]. Pauck's major contributions, alongside his eyewitness descriptions of both Harnack and Troeltsch in the lecture-hall, are his assessment of Harnack as the culmination of the theological line of development which can be pursued on the basis of history [pp.8, 27] and his affirmation that for Harnack history was an existential pursuit, with a personal goal of contributing to the finishing of the Reformation [pp.18-19, 23-25, 35-36].

Rumscheidt

A study of Harnack's relationship to Barth must be of considerable significance for any current assessment of Harnack in view of the prestige of Barth's verdict on his old teacher and how it continues to damage his reputation. But H. Martin Rumscheidt's strongly and openly Barthian reading of the Barth-Harnack correspondence [Revelation and Theology: An analysis of the Barth-Harnack correspondence of 1923, Cambridge University Press, 1972] is handicapped by his apparently limited reading. His bibliography makes no mention of Harnack's New Testament works, of Mission und Ausbreitung, or Vom inwendigen Leben. These are significant works for establishing Harnack's biblical views and his devotional/existential-spiritual dimensions, which are matters of major importance for a dialogue with neo-orthodoxy. And with the exception of von Zahn-Harnack's biography and the 1957 thesis which was the prototype for Glick's book, Rumscheidt is apparently innocent of any secondary literature on Harnack. The very important subject-matter of this book will need to be covered again.

Rumscheidt accused Harnack of positivism, by which he understood the conviction that what we can know of God via scripture, history, and personal experience (noetic ratio) corresponds exactly to God's reality as such (ontic ratio). Barth is presented as the revolutionary figure who dissolves that hubris-laden misconception. But Harnack in fact did not hold such a view. He did believe that what was necessary for us to know of God was accessible to us through God's revelation in history. And he did hold, as Rumscheidt accurately points out, that there is a basic continuity between humanity and God rather than a basic discontinuity, taking seriously, as Barth could not, the scriptural concept of imago dei. But Harnack did not assume that either the knowledge of God gained through apprehension of his revelation in history or the fundamental connectedness between the human and the divine made it possible for us to pronounce on the ontic ratio of God, and in this sense the charge of positivism is unfounded. His epistemology made such an idea completely impossible [see chapter 2.a. below].

If the charge of positivism does not stand, then the basis for Rumscheidt's treatment of Harnack cannot stand either. At points Rumscheidt virtually caricatures him as an elderly pelagian, fearful in the face of dialectical theology [pp.18-19]. The justifiable criticisms of Harnack which Rumscheidt makes are not new [e.g. p.178], and nothing of Harnack's constructive vision for the gospel or theology is in evidence.

Rumscheidt's opinion of Harnack appears more tempered in tone, though little altered in content, in his recent introduction to a very welcome Harnack reader in English [Adolf von Harnack: liberal theology at its height, London, Collins, 1989]. Rumscheidt's affection for Harnack at a personal level also shows through more clearly. Rumscheidt persists, however, in allowing Barthian neo-orthodoxy both to define liberal theology and set the terms for any discussion.

Kaltenborn

Like Rumscheidt, C-J Kaltenborn takes for his subject the relationship of Harnack to a major twentieth-century theological figure, but the difference in the manner of treatment is pronounced. Adolf von Harnack als Lehrer Dietrich Bonhoeffers [Berlin, Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1973] presents Harnack's thought with balance and sympathy, if not with any great new insight, and where it repeats standard criticisms of Harnack, such as his eisegesis of nineteenth-century cultural values into the content of the gospel [see pp.50, 61, 67, 72, 88] and the unacceptable lowness of his christology [pp.64, 122-123, 148], he does so with refreshing clarity and precision. The work is also the best book to date on Harnack's political allegiances and affiliations, and provides a balanced account of Harnack's activities during the First World War [pp.16-23].

In tracing the lasting influences of Harnack upon Bonhoeffer, Kaltenborn helps to bring to light Harnack's enduring significance for theology as a whole. These influences include the positive concept of Weltlichkeit and an abhorrence of trying to 'christianise' all non-religious spheres of reality [pp.69, 79-82, 103, 121], the concept of maturity, of being-of-age and treating the world as 'of age' [pp.82, 138], and of the church as the practical servant of the world [p.145]. Bonhoeffer shared Harnack's positive valuation of antiquity [pp.128f], his anticlericalism [p.137], his position on creeds [pp.139-140], and his admiration of fearlessly honest scholarship [p.141].

Kaltenborn advances our discussion in several ways. He confirms Pauck's view about Harnack's desire to finish the reformation, noting that what troubled Harnack about the reformation was what Bonhoeffer would later term 'cheap grace'—the false opposition of faith to works [p.78]. He also offers a positive explanation for the lack of 'system' in Harnack's constructive work in his discussion of the differences between Harnack and Ritschl. Where Ritschl believed in a closed system, ein streng einheitliche Erkenntnis of God and the world, Kaltenborn argues that Harnack wanted to bring to expression the concreteness and many-sidedness of the religious life, and therefore he did not presume to develop his thought in such a strongly antithetical and dialectical manner [p.14].

Kaltenborn is the first modern critic to take up and extend Sohm's concern with the themes of power and authority in Harnack. He reproduces all the power language which Harnack employs to express the gospel (e.g. p.76), but does not expand on it as such. His concern with power focusses upon the question of authority, which he feels constitutes the chief dilemma of Harnack's theology [see chapter 6 below]. While Kaltenborn sees this attitude as a deficiency in Harnack's thought, he endorses in Harnack's ideas and example a new and salutary relation to human political and social power (Macht), rooted both in his positive attitude towards the world and his insistence that the church should serve and not dominate [Kaltenborn, pp. 16, 149]. I shall argue that Harnack's attitude to power is more complex than Kaltenborn suggests, and that there is at least a measure of contradiction between the attitudes to power which Harnack

demonstrated in his own life and those which he espoused in his writings [see chapters 2, 6 below].

Neufeld

Swiss Jesuit Karl Neufeld offers, in his two books, Adolf von Harnack: Theologie als Suche nach der Kirche, [Paderborn, Verlag Bonifacius-Druckerei, 1977] and Adolf Harnack's Konflikt mit der Kirche: Weg-Stationen zum „Wesen des Christentums“, [Innsbruck, etc., Tyrolia, 1979], the first comprehensive treatment of Harnack since Glick, and the first to focus primarily on Harnack's constructive theological concern. Where Glick made unclear attempts to articulate a central principle of coherence for the interpretation of Harnack's work, Neufeld succeeds, not in terms of providing the definitive answer, but in terms of offering a helpful and plausible 'way in' to Harnack.

Neufeld's work is larger and more thoroughly researched than that of previous Harnack scholars, and his achievements in very many respects require to be built upon rather than repeated—his review of the major Fälle is an example, as is his work on the literature which grew up in response to the publication of Das Wesen [see 1979 pp.17-18] ^e. Neufeld's considerable efforts at rehabilitation are fruitful. They augment and reinforce contributions to this task made by Glick, Pauck and Kaltenborn—after Neufeld it will never again be possible to handle Harnack as though he were negligible as a theologian, or to caricature him as crudely anti-church or anti-dogma. Methodologically one finds encouragement in Neufeld to make one's own attempt to articulate a principle of coherence for Harnack's work, and to use the method of 'sifting' his writings on many subjects in order to find evidence of this principle of coherence [see 1977 p. 33].

Neufeld insists that the organising principles for understanding Harnack's theology should be drawn from existential, Lebenserfahrung, categories rather than academic/historical or theoretical ones, and here again he offers a significant advance upon Glick. Despite his secondary focus on the 'Wesen' of Christianity, Glick remains preoccupied with Harnack's historiography. Neufeld's assertion is not new—Glick and Pauck mention it, and it can be inferred from Kaltenborn—but Neufeld makes it fundamental to his presentation of Harnack. An awareness of the centrality of existential categories to Harnack's thought paves the way towards understanding what Harnack meant by 'the power of the gospel' [see i.e. below]⁷.

Neufeld offers as his principle of coherence for Harnack-interpretation the concern with the church—not as an abstract idea but as anchored in the life experience of Christians, and with a view to a concrete ecclesiastical Neugestaltung, indeed to a tertium genus ecclesiae [see Constitution and Law, pp.171-172]. While the church was of course a major concern of Harnack's, the question remains as to whether in making 'church' Harnack's central focus Neufeld is not guilty of a misidentification. ^e

Central to Neufeld's treatment of Harnack is the thesis that Harnack's own negative personal experiences with the church were the spurs for his critique of the church and for the shaping of his positive vision. He has a point in that, as he describes, Harnack did not just write about, but also experienced, the competing power claims, within the church, of official ecclesiastical authority, authority derived from office and tradition, and the authority, based on specialist competence, of the believing scholar, and he also shows how Harnack was willing to accept the help of the power of the state against the church in order to further his career and pursue his vocation. But I doubt whether biography played such a determining rôle in shaping Harnack's conclusions: had it done so, one would reasonably expect to find in Harnack a thorough-going defence of the directive role of the secular state in church affairs, where quite the reverse is true⁹.

Neufeld has not fully grasped Harnack's positive relation to the world, as is evidenced by the manner of his criticism of Harnack for 'spiritualising' Christianity, for treating revelation as a purely geistlich Ereignis in the inwardness of the person, sparked off by the historical encounter. This spiritualisation in Neufeld's view characterises both Harnack's christology and his idea of the church. His soteriology led to his strongly critical stance with regard to the doctrine of the sacraments and to a Kirchenordnung which laid too great emphasis on externals [1977, pp.358-359]. Neufeld views this spiritualisation as a one-sidedness in Harnack, and explains it by reference to his negative view of nature [see ch.2 below]. I hold that the connexion is only partly true, and that an explanation for it is to be found in politics in the broad sense as much as in a doctrine of nature ¹⁰.

Neufeld, like Kaltenborn, raises useful questions about the problem of legitimate religious authority for Harnack [see ch.6 below]. He also offers thought-provoking criticisms of Harnack beyond the usual charges of reductionism, unacceptably low christology, and blindness to his own Blick. One concerns Harnack's idea of universalism, of Christianity as religion itself, providing the necessary one common foundation for the higher life of humanity. Through this concept, Neufeld comments, Harnack succeeded in distancing himself from the historical relativism of his time, but only by incorporating into his thought a dogmatic element (the unity of humanity). Another insight concerns the extent of Harnack's Zeitgebundenheit: Glick focussed on Harnack's historiography in this respect, and Neufeld turns his attention to the related field of hermeneutics. He maintains that much of the rancour directed at Harnack's questioning the historicity of some biblical passages, for instance, the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, simply would not arise today--the modern observer would feel that Harnack had a perfect right to see and judge the post-resurrection appearances in the biblical witness differently from those of Jesus' earthly life. Neufeld makes the point, however, that it was not only Harnack's opponents who were trapped in the fact/not fact, either/or mentality of the time: Harnack too made the distinction of viewpoints in such a way that many were led to believe that he denied any worth to the biblical reports [1977 pp.287ff].

Neufeld is as yet unsurpassed in the world of Harnack scholarship, and, as indicated, he offers that world firm insights which need to be absorbed. But from the point of view of assessing Harnack's contribution as a

systematic theologian one is left with a sense of frustration. In spite of much time spent, especially in the second book, on the essence of Christianity in Harnack and on Harnack's personal Bekenntnis, Neufeld in the end never quite says what it is which is being confessed. His concern with Harnack as incipient church reformer means that he does not grapple at sufficient depth with Harnack's theology as constructive theology in its own right rather than as a possible blueprint for kirchliche Neugestaltung. He devotes so much energy to assessing Harnack in terms of methodology and hermeneutics, to rehabilitating him from popular prejudice and misconception, and to justifying his theories about Harnack's concern with the Kirchenfrage that he never quite gets to grips with Harnack in his own terms. It is my conviction that with the completion of Neufeld's work the first and second of these tasks are virtually finished, that the third may be deemed a side issue, and that the fourth task—that of grappling with Harnack in his own terms—is the one which remains.

Meijering

Because he takes Harnack's theology as theology so seriously, E.P. Meijering's work sheds some light on this fourth task in his two books on Harnack, Theologische Urteile über die Dogmengeschichte: Ritschl's Einfluss auf von Harnack [Leiden, E.J. Brill] published in 1978, and Die Hellenisierung des Christentums im Urteil Adolf von Harnacks [Amsterdam/Oxford/New York, North-Holland Publishing Co.] published in 1985. Harnack would have approved of his painstaking examination of the primary sources, the rigorous substantiation of theses from the texts, and the balance and courtesy, without any compromise of convictions, of the conclusions [see 1978 pp.76-86]. Meijering's tightly argued work is of substantial evidential value for this investigation on many points of detail, but the very specific focus of each book upon aspects of Dogmengeschichte prevents the development of a holistic perspective on Harnack's constructive thought. While Meijering lacks the interpretive unity of Neufeld, their treatments together constitute a major advance in the depth and discipline of Harnack scholarship. Bibliographically this work also shows a lack of attention to recent Harnack scholarship but does contribute by including the Dutch literature in the field.

One of Meijering's most valuable contributions is his perspective on the neo-orthodox treatment of Harnack, which amounts to a well-substantiated rehabilitation''.

Like Neufeld, Meijering also gives free expression to Harnack's power language, but without probing it for any particular significance. He does, however, take further the question of the possibility of a legitimate external authority for Harnack, and points out a possible contradiction in his thought [see ch.6 below].

Berger

Where Meijering enriches Harnack scholarship with thoroughly-researched detail but lacks an overarching vision, sociologist and theologian Peter Berger makes, with his book The Heretical Imperative [London, Collins, 1980], a major breakthrough in Harnack scholarship in that he focusses explicitly on Harnack's constructive/systematic endeavour and provides a persuasive interpretation of what he was trying to do overall. His interpretation is fundamental to the structure of our own work, and will receive extensive treatment in chapter 2 below. Glick began to chart the ground, and Neufeld made a promising beginning in the interpretation of Harnack's constructive theology, but no one before Berger managed to identify so clearly and describe so accurately the desire, intention and method which governed his work. Berger himself has yet to be taken seriously on the subject. Harnack scholars writing since Berger have not, with the exception of Sykes, pursued the interpretive task, and his treatment is too brief to be more than a beginning [see below]. The others either flesh out our knowledge of specific aspects of Harnack's work which are marginal to this task or provide further introductory, descriptive or critical/analytical treatments.

Johannes Irscher, Jürgen Dummer

The collection of articles published by the Berlin Academy in the DDR to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Harnack's death contributes to our knowledge of specific details of Harnack's work. The leading article is by Johannes Irscher, 'Adolf Harnack und der Fortschritt in der Altertumswissenschaft: zu seinem 50. Todestag' [Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1981]². While never obscuring Harnack's bourgeois allegiance or his life-long identification with Christian theology, Irscher offers a decidedly Marxist reading of Harnack, portraying him as something of a hero of humanistic Wissenschaft, emancipating it from the narrowness of contemporary theology and tearing down the artificial wall that separated philologia sacra and classical philology, sacred history and ancient history [pp.8, 12, 14,].

Jürgen Dummer's 'Adolf von Harnack und das Neue Testament' indicates two potentially fruitful areas of future Harnack-study—an evaluation of his New Testament writings, and a consideration of Harnack's publications in the Sitzungsberichte of the Berlin Academy, writings which to date have featured hardly at all in assessments of Harnack³.

Pelikan, Frend, Schmitz

Along with the critical treatments of Harnack which appear in these decades we note in passing the positive use of his work in the field of

early church history. Jaroslav Pelikan, who through his Doktorvater Pauck can claim a kind of direct link with Harnack, maintains, in his introduction to Glick's Reality, that "it is time for the pupils of Harnack's pupils to look more deeply into the work of the master himself" [Reality, p.xii]. Pelikan's own treatment of early Christian doctrine, entitled The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine [University of Chicago Press, vol.I, 1971, etc] openly acknowledges its debt to Harnack and builds upon foundations which he laid [vol.I, p.359]. Frend, like Pelikan, finds in Harnack's work a basis for his own. The inspiration for Frend's book, The Rise of Christianity [Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1984] was Harnack's Mission und Ausbreitung [p.1], and Frend notes that Harnack acted as a stimulus and example to researchers to get out of the library and into the fields to dig [private communication, 1979]. A third example of a relatively recent positive application of Harnack's knowledge and central method is to be found in liberal catholic historian Hermann-Josef Schmitz's book, Frühkatholizismus bei Adolf von Harnack, Rudolf Sohm und Ernst Käsemann [Düsseldorf, Patmos Verlag, 1977].

S.W.Sykes

Sykes' subject in The Identity of Christianity [1984] is not Harnack per se, but rather the way his entire period handled a question which was central to him, namely the problem of continuity. Most of what he has to say about Harnack is confined to one chapter, but despite its brevity Sykes' treatment of Harnack is important in several ways. Rehabilitation is the chief of these services, and is of especial relevance with regard to Harnack's reputation in the English-speaking world. Sykes demonstrates that the evaluation of Harnack in standard theological works is woefully inadequate, discusses the largely unjustified reasons for Harnack's continuing unpopularity in England, and explodes many Harnack-myths, especially with reference to his celebrated controversy with Loisy [pp.128-129, 132, 134, 142]. He offers significant new rehabilitative work with his mature and perceptive interpretation of what was really at stake in the Harnack-Loisy debate and how much, despite Loisy's rhetoric, the two antagonists had in common [pp.123-147], and again with his dismantling of the too-frequent identification of Harnack solely with the metaphor of kernel and husk to describe the relationship of 'the gospel' to the phenomena of Christianity [pp.135-137]. It is curious that he makes no direct mention, in discussing Harnack's unpopularity, of the continuing antagonistic influence of Barth.

In addition to the task of rehabilitation, when the corrections have been made and the caricatures which pass for Harnack have been laid to rest, Sykes offers us a positive portrait of Harnack. It is a somewhat sketchy and incomplete one, which one would expect in a brief treatment, but it is clear and original with regard to the rôle that the theme of power played in Harnack's work. The rôle of power and conflict in the life and development of Christianity forms an important sub-theme in Identity [see pp.51f], and Sykes with justice underscores its prominence in Harnack's interpretation of Christian history. This is to be seen not only in

Harnack's well-documented lament that the original spiritual content of Christianity was diminished and overlaid in time by human powers of authority, tradition, and coercion, but also in the description of the very heart of the original spiritual content of Christianity, which he offers in power terms (see Identity, pp.140-142). Sykes summarises Harnack's thesis by saying that for him Christianity contains the power of total inner conviction and transformation, and quotes Harnack to the effect that the Kingdom, "...is in its very nature a spiritual force (Grösse), a power (Macht) which sinks into a man within, and can be understood only from within..." [ibid. p.141]. This power expresses itself in personality, supremely in the personality of Christ. Sykes rightly focusses on this 'power' key to Harnack's christology, locating him within the 'character of Christ' school of apologetic [p.141]. What he perhaps neglects is the teasing-out of the meaning of 'total inner conviction and transformation'—i.e. the power of ideas which, with the power of personality, constitute the two foci of the Harnackean ellipse.

Sykes is also careful in Identity to spell out the implications of Harnack's approach to the theological task for the power of the theologian. It is, in his view, a factor uniting Loisy, Harnack and Troeltsch that they give the task of determining what is essential, genuine and of lasting value in Christianity to historians and theologians, and, Sykes notes, in doing so they place tremendous power in their hands [pp. 145, 146, 155-156]. One could have wished to have this theme explored more fully.

Sykes also does not make as clear as one would wish the fact that Harnack's objection to the gradual infiltration of Christianity by human powers of authority and tradition was not to their existence as such, which he acknowledges is inevitable in an imperfect world, but to their claim for themselves that they were religious powers and their interpolation of themselves into the 'things necessary for salvation'. He is also unsatisfactory in his handling of the question of Harnack's many definitions of the gospel. When, in setting the terms for the Harnack-Loisy debate, he answers the question of what, according to each writer, is the identity of Christianity, he, for Harnack's answer, uses one particular definition from Outlines [p.133], and does not include the important proviso that for Harnack one can identify no summary with 'the gospel' because the gospel is an existential experience of spiritual power, induced by contact with Jesus' teachings and personality and not finally to be identified with any form of words. Sykes hints at this by stressing the importance for Harnack of a living relationship with Christ [p.135], but it needs to be more firmly spelt out.

Harnack scholars before Sykes have noted, reproduced and described in a less than fully conscious manner the power language which saturates his work, and have fastened on the transformatory experience as being central to his understanding of the gospel. But Sykes is the first unambiguously to suggest the theme of power as a coherent principle for the interpretation of Harnack. This thesis attempts to build on this suggestion and to explore its validity and implications.

Döbertin

Sykes offers the most recent original contribution to the interpretation of Harnack's constructive theology. Winfried Döbertin's 1985 publication, Adolf von Harnack: Theologe, Pädagoge, Wissenschaftspolitiker [Bern, Peter Lang] belongs in a class with Hiers, Pauck, Irmischer and Dummer in that it provides valuable information on specific details but contributes little to overall Harnack interpretation. Döbertin is a lecturer in education rather than a theologian, and his work reflects that difference of perspective. His treatment is factually accurate and also sympathetic, but his bibliography is limited, omitting many important secondary sources including Glick and the first of Neufeld' books.

The work is intended to form a basic introduction both to Harnack and to the theological issues of his period. Döbertin's contextualisation of Harnack takes a less usual tack in comparing his views not only with ecclesiastical orthodoxy but also with more radical elements—for instance, contrasting his biblical criticism with that of the seminal figure of Reimarus [pp.113f] and his portrait of Jesus with those of Strauss, Bruno Bauer, Kalthoff and Kautsky [pp.119f]. His review of the contemporary state of biblical research in Harnack's time is workmanlike and valuable for the nonspecialist [pp.124f], and any Harnack scholar seeking to take up Irmischer's challenge to produce an academic biography would do well to heed Döbertin's suggestion that to understand his religious upbringing one should not only read Agnes von Zahn Harnack's biography, but also investigate Theodosius Harnack's Katechetik(1882) [p.133].

Döbertin affirms Harnack's continuing significance in the fields of theology, pedagogy, and politics [p.8], and he makes more effort than most to state explicitly what the terms of that continuing significance are. For our concern with Harnack as a constructive theologian, this is the most helpful aspect of the book. Döbertin summarises Harnack's lasting contributions in terms of establishing the validity of the quest for meaning [pp.159-160], the centrality of Jesus, and the principle that social/political engagement is better accomplished by those who feel themselves responsible to Transcendence for their actions. He values Harnack's insistence on the relativity and alterability of all historical relations, on the importance for education of an historical method of thinking, and on intellectual pluralism [pp.198-204]. His portrayal of Harnack's theology is rather bland, with the greatest stress on his ethics [pp.166-167,175-176] and much less emphasis on the powerful encounter of personalities which makes ethical transformation possible, though this latter motif is not wholly absent [see pp.151-152].

Conclusion

The story of Harnack-interpretation is a patchy one, spread out over a number of decades and conducted by scholars of several nations and very

different theological/ideological traditions, working for the most part in isolation. Yet some unifying threads connect their work. There has been a growing sense in the years since 1951 that Harnack's work has been wrongfully neglected. The tasks of reintroduction and rehabilitation, along with the delineation of the justifiable criticisms of Harnack, have been vigorously pursued and may be deemed virtually complete. The criticisms advanced by his contemporaries have not been substantially altered, although recent scholars have been better able to perceive both the ways in which his thought is zeitgebunden and also its intrinsic relatedness to the generation of theologians who immediately succeeded and forcefully rejected him. What is still embryonic is the examination and interpretation of Harnack's constructive or systematic theology.

Glick marks the first milestone in this regard, for his is the first significant treatment of Harnack as a thinker. Despite flaws, he offers valuable introductory, rehabilitative and critical insights, and with his stress on the importance of the 'reality' of Christianity for Harnack as a dynamic principle rather than a defined doctrine, he gropes towards a view of Harnack's systematic theology.

Neufeld's work is the second milestone in the interpretation of Harnack's constructive theology. He continues with the tasks of introduction, rehabilitation and criticism, and also advances insights on the zeitgebundenheit of Harnack's hermeneutics and on the problem of authority in Harnack. But most importantly, he makes a significant advance in the task begun by Glick, in offering a single, unifying principle of coherence—the idea of the church—by which to interpret Harnack's positive vision. The fact that his choice of a principle of coherence is less than satisfactory is less important than his courage in attempting to reach a Gesamtschau of Harnack's constructive thought.

Berger constitutes the third milestone because his treatment of Harnack focusses almost exclusively on Harnack's constructive/systematic endeavour and offers a holistic interpretation of what Harnack was attempting to do. Berger's results will be foundational to this thesis.

Sykes further augments the tasks of rehabilitation and the contextualisation of Harnack's theology, but his originality and importance for Harnack-interpretation lies in his locating the issues of power at the centre of Harnack's systematic thought. He recognises that power themes in Harnack concern not just the question of authority for faith and for the church, but, still more significantly, the question of the meaning of the gospel itself. The story of the understanding of Harnack's constructive theology so far ends with Sykes: this thesis will start with his insights about Harnack and power and examine and develop them further.

1.d: Harnack as apologist and reformer

Apologist?

Harnack claimed for himself the title of objective historian, strongly rejecting that of apologist, and certainly his world took him seriously as an historian'. In his preface to the 1894 English edition of History of Dogma Harnack maintains that in an historical work there is no room for enquiry as to the 'standpoint' of the author: the right questions concern whether he is in sympathy with the subject, whether he can distinguish original elements from derived, whether he knows the material thoroughly, whether he is truthful, and whether he understands the limits of historical knowledge. Answering these questions, says Harnack, requires tireless self-discipline: "Hence every historical study is an ethical task. The historian ought to be faithful in every sense of the word..."[HD I preface]. Included in Harnack's conception of this task, though, as he notes a few pages later, is the duty of stating one's own opinion [HD I p.21].

The opening chapter of Das Wesen makes his identification with the task of 'pure history' still clearer. Harnack writes that he will attempt to answer the question, 'what is Christianity?' solely with the methods of historical science and the experience of life which comes from living through history, thus excluding the methods of the apologist and the philosopher [WC? p.6/DW p.4]. He affirms the value of apologetics, of seeking to establish the truth of Christianity, but insists that it must be kept completely separate from the purely historical task of determining the nature or content of Christianity, "or else historical research will be brought into complete discredit". Harnack goes on to criticise the current state of apologetics in such a way that we can readily understand, if his description is accurate, why he repudiated the title of apologist, and why no respectable scholar would have been anxious to be known as one. For the kind of apologetic needed today, writes Harnack, we possess no really high standard, and with a few exceptions, apologetics as a subject of study is in a deplorable state:

"...it is not clear as to the positions to be defended, and it is uncertain as to the means to be employed. It is also not infrequently pursued in an undignified and obtrusive fashion. Apologists imagine that they are doing a great work by crying up religion as though it were a job-lot at a sale, or a universal remedy for all social ills. They are perpetually snatching, too, at all sorts of baubles, so as to deck out religion in fine clothes. In their endeavour to present it as a glorious necessity, they deprive it of its earnest character, and at the best only prove that it is something which may be safely accepted because it can do no harm. Finally, they cannot refrain from slipping in some church programme of yesterday and 'demonstrating' its claims as well. The structure of their ideas is so loose that an idea or two more makes no difference. The mischief that has been thereby done already and is still being done is indescribable "[WC? pp.7-8/DW pp.4-5].

Yet it can be demonstrated from Das Wesen in particular and from Harnack's writings overall that the chief aim of his theological efforts was not merely to express accurately what in history has been the nature of Christianity, but to commend the Christian faith to his increasingly scientific and secular age as truth, and as truth to be lived. Eventually Harnack himself admitted this. Years after the publication of Das Wesen, a student challenged him on his claim in the book to speak purely as an historian and not as an apologist. Harnack replied after some thought, "I see now that as you say, my real interest was apologetic, but at the time I did not realize it" [quoted in W. Adams Brown, 'A Retrospect of Forty Years', Edinburgh Expository Times vol.42, Dec.1930, p.104].

Most of Harnack's contemporary critics saw his work as apologetic in intent [Cremer (1903), p.xi; Lacey, p.9; Sanday, p.5]. More recently, Glick demonstrates that Harnack's sincere desire to write purely objective history was only sporadically fulfilled, and that from apologetic motives he imposed upon the history a set of criteria as to its value for the modern world [Glick, Reality, pp.65-67, 83-84, 267, 304, 327-328].

Harnack's apologetic, consciously or unconsciously, employs three main strategies. The first is the very claim to scientific objectivity, the second is the essencing procedure, and the third is the 'retranslation' of traditional dogmas.

Regardless of the degree to which Harnack achieved his desired scientific objectivity, one cannot fail to see how extremely attractive and useful an apologetic tool the claim to pure objectivity must have been in Germany at the turn of the last century [see Glick, Reality, p.66]. Harnack, in discussing his method of approach to the question of Christianity in Das Wesen, notes that had he delivered the lecture sixty years earlier, he would have begun with finding, by speculation, a general conception of religion and then have proceeded to define Christianity accordingly. He says that since then, however, there has grown up, and rightly, a scepticism about such a procedure: "...We know today", he says, "that life cannot be spanned by general conceptions..." [WC? pp.8-9/DW pp.5-6]. 'We know today'—how this phrase embodies the pride and confidence in Wissenschaft that was felt then! One does not wish, however, to suggest that Harnack self-consciously used objectivity as an apologetic tool. He simply devoted himself to a 'scientific' method because he believed it was the surest road to the truth. But by providing his critical, empirically-minded contemporaries with a basis for their faith which was congruent with current epistemology Harnack rendered to his age a valuable apologetic service.

The letter to Stinzing [see 1.b. above] demonstrates that from the outset Harnack studied history with a purpose. Both the apologetic aims and the historical methods about which the young Harnack wrote so hopefully appear to have guided his work throughout his long career. It is impossible not to see that Harnack brings to his work a number of unchallenged assumptions. Chief among them is the conviction that not all of the phenomena which can be termed Christian are permanent and essential, but that there is something in the gospel which is essential, permanent and still of supreme value today. Neither did Harnack question the belief that the permanent factor in Christianity is best discovered by a thorough and

critical study of its history. The idea of an essence of Christianity, of an irreducible kernel of truth and power which can exist underneath all or any external husks, constitutes the second of Harnack's apologetic strategies. It was by no means unique to Harnack and was employed by many nineteenth-century theologians². Many of Harnack's opponents objected to the essence procedure as an unjustified reductionism, preferring instead to look at 'the whole' of the New Testament teaching [see 1.c above], ignoring the fact that any theologian, simply by the selection and arrangement of material and by the choice of omissions, tacitly indicates that there is material of greater and lesser value in the Christian tradition, that there is in some sense a kernel and a husk. However unpopular the term, some notion of an essence (though not necessarily of an unchanging essence) must be held by any writer who wishes to argue for any sort of continuity among the wildly diverse phenomena that have in history laid claim to the name 'Christian'; by any missionary who seeks to recommend the faith to another culture, and by any reformer who wishes either to add something new to the practice of Christianity or to do away with something old.

Harnack sees an essencing procedure as vital to any progress in the discipline of the history of dogma:

"Every advance in the future treatment of our subject will further depend on the effort to comprehend the history of dogma without reference to the momentary opinions of the present, and also on keeping it in closest connection with the history of the Church...But progress is finally dependent on a true perception of what the Christian religion originally was, for this perception alone enables us to distinguish that which sprang out of the inherent power of Christianity from that which it has assimilated in the course of its history" [HD I p.39].

Harnack considered the differentiation of original and accretion, of the 'eternal' and the zeitgeschichtlich, to be one of the chief tasks of the historian. The historian's business and highest duty is to determine what is of permanent value, for the 'whole Christ' and the 'whole gospel', that is, the external image and all its details, if set up for imitation, is as bad and deceptive a shibboleth as the 'whole Luther' would be [WC? p.13/DW pp.8-9]. Harnack was convinced that no thinking historian could brand the task of determining the essence of Christianity as unhistorical or inadmissible. Historical understanding, he held, only begins when one can free the essential and unique elements in a great occurrence from the trappings of the times [die zeitgeschichtlichen Hüllen]. That many primitive features must be sacrificed, including some which in their time appeared essential and were so, is inevitable, but the attempt must be made. For where an historical event is concerned it is the historian and not the antiquary, the philosopher or the fanatic who must have the last word as to its individuality [DW, Vorwort zum 45-50 Tsd., p.xi].

In this aspect of Harnack's method, which may be termed 'the royal judging function' [ibid. pp.217, 324; also pp.83, 90, 94, 95] we find his methodological legitimation for a selectivity with history in terms of its value for the present, and for an essencing procedure. Harnack's historical approach does not stop at merely describing facts and sequences

of events, but rather involves a considerable amount of judging and interpretation. In the preface to the first edition of Das Wesen, Harnack insists that the historian's task includes the responsibility to discriminate between the essential, lasting elements in the phenomena, and, having so distinguished, to throw the essentials into relief and render them understandable [DW p.iiil]. Harnack at several points seeks to safeguard his objectivity by insisting that these judgments are judgments as to fact, as to what the Christian gospel historically has been, rather than judgments as to the value of that gospel [WC? p.17]. The main thing, he notes in the first lecture, is not what positive value the individual who looks at religion gives it for his own life, but, "to learn what religion is and in what its essential character consists" [ibid. WC? p.8/DW p.4l].

Yet elsewhere in the book Harnack takes this 'judging' process much further—over into the realm of true apologetic. At the beginning of a discussion of the death and resurrection of Christ, he notes that "it is not our business to defend either the view which was taken of the death, or the idea that he has risen again: but it is certainly the historian's duty to make himself so fully acquainted with both positions as to be sensible of the significance which they possessed and still possess..." He continues by saying that the fact that these positions were of capital importance for the primitive community has never been doubted, and that it must be possible for us to get a feeling and understanding of what they were. But then he goes further: "...nay, perhaps we may do more; if we probe the history of religion to the bottom, we shall find the truth and justice of ideas which on the surface seem so paradoxical and incredible lying at the very roots of the faith" [ibid. WC? p.8/DW p.4l]. Harnack, then, recommends that one can and ought to try, not only to understand the significance of historical ideas, but also, by probing the depth of the history of religion, to find their truth and justice. Determining what is essential and understanding its significance may be judged to be an historical undertaking, but when one attempts to 'find' the truth and justice of what is essential, one has indeed become an apologist.

One could easily conclude that because Harnack approached history with assumptions and a motive, his results were very heavily influenced by them. Glick comes close to saying that his conclusions were virtually predetermined [Glick, Reality pp.14, 104, 112-114, 149, 161, 170-171], although his respect for Harnack's historical proficiency and integrity cause him to qualify the position somewhat [ibid. pp.332, 344-345; plus Jaroslav Pelikan's introduction, ibid. pp.xii-xiiil]. Certainly Harnack's claims to scientific objectivity sound arrogant and naive today. But it may be that we have become too sceptical, put off by his overconfidence, and that Harnack's motives and assumptions had a much lesser degree of influence over the outcome of his work. Their influence lay in the charting of directions: his belief that there was something permanent and essential in Christianity indeed led him to look for it, and his commitment to historical investigation indicated how and where to look. But it is not necessary to draw from this the inference that the content of his 'essence of Christianity' was imposed from outside of his researches. The character which prized its understanding of the truth so much that it was willing to

bear the 'excommunication' of a beloved father and of a whole tradition would not easily have been induced to embrace Kant and Ritschl for any other reason than that their interpretations accorded more closely with the results of his own painstaking investigations. His well-documented commitment to and skill with the historical method make it at least possible that his results were truly results of his historical labours, rather than predetermined answers, as Sanday and Loisy suggest [Sanday, pp.15-16; and Sykes, Identity, pp.129, 142-143]. As Pelikan notes; "We may presume to criticise Harnack only if our dedication to the hard work of historical study is as single-minded as his was..." [Intro. to Glick, Reality, p.xii-xiii]. In addition, it needs to be remembered that the possession of a point of view is not a crime: objections to Harnack's history as history can really only be sustained where it can be demonstrated that his narrative scheme of church history distorts or contradicts the evidence.

The apologetic task takes a prominent structural place in Das Wesen, and a major tool of Harnack's apologetic, linked to the essencing procedure, comes into play, namely the idea of the eternal validity of the gospel. After delineating the chief features of Jesus' message, and before describing the transformations of this gospel in the course of history, Harnack dedicates nearly one third of the book to describing 'the gospel in relation to certain problems', problems which turn out to be of direct apologetic interest to Harnack's own time. In these discussions a recurring pattern emerges, one of defence against criticism from 'the modern world', 'people today', 'earnest men of a socialist persuasion' and 'modern science', to which Harnack replies in various ways that one cannot escape the claims of the gospel by hiding behind this or that objection. More important than any specific answer he gives is the fact that he feels obliged to spend so much time on these questions in the course of an allegedly historical discussion. Examples of this pattern are his treatment of miracles [WC? p.28/DW p.19], aceticism [WC? pp.80, 81, 84], the accusation that religion is the opium of the people [WC? pp.110-116], that Christianity ignores progress and culture [WC? pp.119-120], that it is too complicated doctrinally [WC? p.143], that it is inextricably tied to an outmoded world-view [WC? p.149/DW p.94, WC? pp.179-180/DW p.112; see also HD I p.21]. Repeatedly Harnack makes the point that the essential elements of the gospel are permanent and eternally valid, that it remains in force for us today.

It is upon the assumption that the essential elements of the gospel are permanent and eternally valid that Harnack based his third apologetic strategy, namely the practice of reinterpreting traditional doctrines and formulae into concepts which were more easily intelligible to his contemporaries. While retaining traditional terminology, he often so redefined it that it sometimes appears as if he has substituted something entirely different. His intention was always to be faithful both to the message of the tradition and to his Ritschlian epistemology [see 2.a. below]. His use of the language of tradition, while redefining it in terms of inner experience, along with the fact of his own deep piety, makes Harnack's work an alternative to the either/or of the mythological form of thought of protestant orthodoxy and the demythologised world of a radical reductionism. [see 2.b. below; also examples of his redefinition procedure in 3.a. below].

Harnack as reformer?

At the famous Aarau conference of 1921 which saw the debut of Karl Barth, Harnack also spoke, and one of his themes was the practical purpose of 'doing' history. He wrote:

"...we are not in the world to discuss it amongst ourselves or to contemplate it, *but rather to further the whole and to serve our neighbour*...We study history...to free ourselves from the *past* where it has become to us a burden, then in order to be able to do what is right in the *present*, and finally in order to prudently and appropriately prepare for the *future*" ['Was hat die Historie am fester Erkenntnis zur Deutung des Weltgeschehens zu bieten?' in R&A nf 2, pp.171f].

It is reasonable to deduce from this that Harnack too had practical goals for his work, and it is clear that the context within which he set his own vocation as theologian, along with Ritschl's, was that of the completion of the reformation [HD VII p.272]. In numerous places Harnack makes it clear that in Luther's reformation a task was gloriously begun which did not then and has not yet come to fruition—the freeing of Christianity from the cultural baggage of antiquity, and the development of a genuinely evangelical Lebensideal [HD VII pp.194-195, 238f, 245f]. In Mission and Expansion he writes of Christianity:

This religion was the first to cut the ground from under the feet of all other religions, and by means of her religious philosophy, as a civilizing power, to displace ancient philosophy. But the reasons for the triumph of Christianity in that age are no guarantee for the permanence of that triumph throughout the history of mankind. Such a triumph rather depends upon the simple elements of the religion, on the preaching of the living God as the Father of men, and on the representation of Jesus Christ. For that very reason it depends also on the capacity of Christianity to strip off repeatedly such a collective syncretism and unite itself to fresh coefficients. "The Reformation made a beginning in this direction" [M&E I, p.318].

In What is Christianity? he notes that, in its doctrine and in the view which it took of history, the Reformation was far from being a finished product:

"It could not, like Pallas Athene, spring complete from Jupiter's head; as doctrine it could do no more than mark a *beginning*, and it had to reckon on future development..." [WC? pp.290-291; see also HD VII p.238].

The need for a completion of the Reformation is set out most clearly in the Dogmengeschichte's evaluation of Luther. Harnack notes that the years 1519-1523 were the springtime of the reformation, but a spring which was followed by no abundant summer, for after that Luther retired within his limits [HD VII pp.170, 229-235]. He argues that Luther did not hand over something complete and finished to Christendom, "...but set before it a problem, to be developed out of many encumbering surroundings, to be continuously dealt with in connection with the entire life of the spirit

and with the social condition of mankind, but to be solved only in faith itself. Christendom must constantly go on to learn, that even in religion the simplest thing is the most difficult, and that everything that is a burden upon religion quenches its seriousness..." [HD VII p.273].

Harnack emphasises that whatever the rhetoric about fidelity to Luther, modern protestantism does not stand where Luther stood in endorsing the harmony he perceived between his faith and the core of the ancient dogma and finding it necessary only to supplement it with justification by faith and clear away the medieval rubbish:

"From this point of view the whole development of Protestantism from the end of the seventeenth century till the present day must appear a mistaken development, nay, an apostasy. It is a pity, only, that almost all thinking Protestants have apostasised, and, for the most part, differ from each other only according to the clearness and honesty with which they admit their apostasy" [HD VII p.180].

One of the most important aspects for Harnack of the task of finishing the reformation was the taking forward of Luther's beginnings at establishing a Lebensideal which adopted a positive attitude towards activity in the world. While not wishing to extinguish what he terms the 'Augustinian mood' in Christianity, that is, assuagement of the pain of sin, and mitigation of the evil of the world, Harnack held that:

"...the task that is set to Christian faith today is...to take a powerful part in the moulding of personality, in the productive development of the dominion over nature, and the interpenetrating of the spiritual life with the spirit, and to prove its indispensableness in these directions, otherwise it will become the possession of a sect, in disregard of whom the great course of our history will pass on its way" [HD VII p.195].

Harnack's relations with the church of his time were a source of pain, yet he remained within the church. He knew that the church would be glad to see the back of him, and leaving would have been much easier for him also. Yet several things kept him in—the duty he felt by virtue of occupying, in the university, a semi-ecclesiastical post, his historical conscience and his sense of responsibility for his students [AZH p.299]. But alongside the sombre motives of duty and conscience there was also hope, that is, a consciousness that his devoted scholarship was part of the struggle for change, preparing the way for the reformation of the church. Dibelius' contribution to the centenary Festschrift records words of Harnack's which convey this sense of struggle and hope:

"We belong within our Landeskirchen; it is here that we received our vocation...The conflicts are not going to disappear: they will get still hotter. But even the mightiest of them shall not make us weary, neither shall it make us joyless. Impossibile est, ut non laetetur qui sperat in Domino" [in Aland, ed. A.H. in memoriam, pp.34-35, my translation].

His hope was not bound, however, to a particular ecclesiastical organisation. In describing the protestant 'doctrine of the church' he

writes that though protestants recognise that in the interest of order and instruction outward and visible communities are needed, "...we do not hang our hearts upon them," for tomorrow new organisations might be necessary: "...our Church is not the particular Church in which we are placed, but the 'societas fidel', which has its members everywhere, even among Greeks and Romans" [WC? p.276].

Neufeld's research confirms both Harnack's hope for and interest in the church, and provides a valuable corrective to the common assumption that Harnack's interest was in pure and somewhat abstract theology divorced from practical ecclesiology. Though guilty in our view of considerable overstatement, Neufeld makes the case that Harnack did have, if only in outline, a positive vision for the church. And whether or not the ultimate 'reformatory' idea of the creation of a new kind of church really took hold of Harnack in the way Neufeld insists, what seems indisputable is that Harnack possessed a strong and positive ecclesial interest, and promoted a thoroughgoing and consistent finishing of the reformation.

Of what did Harnack's positive vision for the church consist? Neufeld suggests the following elements, which he labels as Harnack's Kirchenprogramm, but in view of the vagueness of many parts, it would be more accurate to describe them as hopes or visions. They include:

A positive attitude to the world: the "...conviction that Christianity, with its task of salvation, is fundamentally positively related to the actual world. Its message is not, at least in the first instance, to judge the world, but to mediate to it the salvation of God." [Neufeld (1977), p.359].

The universal character of the gospel: modern mankind requires one common foundation [Grundlage] for its higher life. The early church achieved this not by crushing other groups but by the possession of an active Selbstbewußtsein, which is missing today. Christians today would rather withdraw into ghettos or accommodate themselves to prevailing secular trends [ibid. pp.351f] .

Mission as the unique and characteristic expression of the christian life: [ibid. p.358]

The Christian as a new person, the Church as a new Volk: [ibid.]

An emphasis on freedom and liberation: in terms of doctrine, worship, church order [ibid. p.352] In What is Christianity? Harnack expressly calls for more freedom and individuality in utterance and doctrine, from rules and limits, and more confidence, not in outward forms of safeguard, but, "...in the inner strength and unifying power of the Gospel, which is more certain to prevail in free conflict than under guardianship" [WC? p.276] To this end, though obviously with some trepidation, Harnack advocated a greater independence from the state, holding that the constitution of the church into state-churches nearly destroyed the reformation [WC? pp. 286, 291, 297].

A critical reduction to principles: in the history of religion, every important reformation is first and foremost such a reduction, a stripping off of the accretions of time, whether foreign in origin or home-grown

[WC? p.270]. Neufeld notes that Harnack believed that out of the true centre of what is Christian the Christianity of today would develop its necessary and legitimate self-understanding, but wonders by what right such a reduction can be made, and what it would look like [Neufeld (1977) p.352].

Allied to a positive view of the world is another part of Harnack's vision for the church, namely an increasingly effective participation in the resolution of what those of his day simply called 'the social question', that is, the issues of social justice, inequality, and materialism raised by the growth of atheistic marxist social democracy [WC? p.300].

If we are correct, then, Harnack cherished hopes and visions for the completion of the reformation and the renewal of the church. But what action, if any, did he take to turn these ideas into deeds which would create new forms?

As we have noted, when in the course of the Apostolikumsstreit Harnack was asked to formulate an alternative statement of faith he declined, saying 'Ich bin kein Reformator' [AZH p.212]. His stated reasons for declining included a fear of agitators and an unwillingness to jeopardise many people's faith. Indeed this controversy seems typical of Harnack's approach to the challenge of actual change. He was prepared boldly to state his convictions, no matter how scandalous they might appear to others and regardless of the cost to himself, and also to point out what should be done. But he made vigorous efforts to quash what he felt was 'rash' action on the matter—i.e. his students' proposed petition to the Evangelische Oberkirchenrat—and he refused to take what would have been a 'political' action on his part, namely the formulation of the proposed new creed. He was perfectly aware of the limitations which the refusal of direct action imposed upon his effectiveness. In a comment on Porphyry's cogent refutation of Christianity, and the fact that there is no record of its effect except for the horror it produced among the church fathers, he writes:

"Yet even a literary work of superlative excellence could hardly have won the day. The religion of the Church had become a world-religion by the time that Porphyry wrote, and no professor can wage war successfully against such religions, unless his hand grasps the sword of the reformer as well as the author's pen" [M&E I p.509].

But Harnack clearly refused the sword, and stuck to the pen. The decision at first glance looks like either excessive humility or lack of nerve, but it may have been neither.

Firstly there was the matter of political outlook and temperament. Harnack appears in all his practical pursuits to have been a gradualist reformer, not a revolutionary. And temperamentally he was an 'organisation man', loyal to his Kaiser and to the structures of mandarin academe. (Contrarily, though, we find in his writings a passion for the revolutionaries, a compassion for, and even a championing of, the heretics. His treatment of Montanism and Paul of Samosata in History of Dogma and of course his love for Marcion provide examples of this.) He acted decisively for the improvement of the Royal Library during his

directorship, but within the system and from the top. His activity in the Evangelisch-Sozial Kongress comes closest to an advocacy of practical reform, but its focus soon became the reform of ideas rather than actual social conditions, a situation which Ward attributes in no small measure to Harnack's influence. He notes that under Harnack's presidency the Kongress became increasingly abstract and taken up with the subject of personality [Ward pp. 81-82]. Where the church was concerned, Harnack could not work either from the inside or from the top, which would leave him, if he desired practical action, only the unpalatable alternative of forming a sect.

But the heart of the matter lies, as has been mentioned before, in the very confidence Harnack felt in his own correct place in the process of the reform of the church. As an old man Harnack attended a lecture of Otto Dibelius' and spoke at the end of it:

"Every generation receives from God as the Lord of history a special task. The task of our generation was to earn respect once again for theology as such within German Wissenschaft. You have no idea how disdainfully theological science was treated in the eighteen-sixties and seventies. Our generation fulfilled its task...The task of the new generation is the church. But you must not take it ill if as an old man I ask the theological youth of today; in pursuing your own special task, do not forget theological Wissenschaft completely" [quoted in Dibelius' article, 'Adolf Harnack als akademischer Lehrer', in K. Aland, ed. Adolf Harnack: in memoriam, (1951), p.34, my translation].

Harnack saw the task of able protestants of his generation as being the reformation and restoration of theology to a position of genuine quality, leadership and credibility; and the task of the next generation, building on that solid foundation, was the reformation of the church. Harnack declined to attempt to act in this regard because his sense of priorities led him to regard any action on this front as premature. He was content to 'do his bit' in his own time, and leave the ultimate results in the hands of the Lord of history.

Thus we see in operation Harnack's understanding of how the power of God works in history. He saw himself as part of the historical macroprocess which would eventually lead to a higher stage for the church. His conviction was unshakeable that God ruled history, and that, in the end, it was the creator spiritus which shaped the centuries. On such an understanding, it was both presumptuous and unnecessary to attempt to force the pace. This conviction also lent him a certain patience with movements in theology which seemed wrong to him. Of one such he writes, "....also will ich mich langsam auf meine Arbeit zurückziehen und dem breiteren Strom der Entwicklung seinen Lauf lassen...Vielleicht entwickelt sich aus diesem Spiele doch noch etwas Erhebliches..." [AZH p.298].

Harnack was also convinced that it is chiefly through great personalities that the power of God is active in history. As part of his answer to his students in the Apostolikumstreit, Harnack says that the churches of the reformation must stand with the creeds of the past and continue to do so until, "....sie die Kraft zu einer neuen reformatorischen Tat oder eine neue

reformatorische Persönlichkeit erhalten" [AZH p.197]. Harnack knew himself not to be that personality, and he was content to wait. The concept of Beruf which he shared with Luther and attributed to Christ was very important to him, and he knew that his calling was, through his scholarship, simply to prepare the way.

So was Harnack a reformer, or at least a would-be reformer of the church? Glick's provocative article, 'Ich bin kein Reformator, aber...' [in J.C. Brauer, ed., The Impact of the Church upon its Culture: Reappraisals of the History of Christianity, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1968] sheds some light on this question. But the tantalising 'aber' is not followed up as clearly as one might have hoped. The article is valuable in documenting, mostly from letters recorded in Zahn-Harnack's biography, Harnack's express intention to serve the church, but the role thus indicated is one of mediator more than reformer. Glick argues that the church, in rejecting his attempts to be a mediator within it, forced him into the role of mediator towards the culture; "...and thereby he became a reformer, cum sensu prorsus alieno, within the church...In effect he was forced into the role of prophet to the culture; and one could argue that thereby the consistorial functionaries who had initially opposed him guaranteed, lacking the prescience to identify his genius, the effect which they had thought to curb" [Glick (1968), p.354].

Glick states that in fulfilling the role of prophet/apologist/mediator to the culture Harnack succeeded to some extent in becoming a reformer of the church, but he offers no direct proof or explanation as to how this occurred. Certainly the gradual and grudging, but in the end whole-hearted endorsement of the historical-critical method by first the protestant churches and later by catholicism is one reform for which Harnack can take a share of the credit. And other elements of Harnack's desired 'programme' for church reform have indeed come to pass—the increased role of the laity, the freeing up of public worship, the ordination of women [see AZH pp.301, 501]—but it would be difficult to do more than say that the publicity and prestige of his pronouncements helped to create a climate of public opinion in which such reforms became possible. Ironically it was in America rather than Germany that Harnack's ideas were embraced most directly within the churches [Glick, Reality, p.323].

It is indeed easier to see Harnack in the role of prophet rather than reformer, for it was his words, rather than his practical deeds, which urged radical change. His practical and administrative work could hardly be called reform, in the sense of a fundamental change of direction, but rather served to further all that was best in the mandarin ideal. But does the fact that most of his innovative and reforming energies went into ideas mean that Harnack had no vocation as a reformer at all? Not necessarily: once again it is a question of means rather than ends. Such a high opinion of Wissenschaft and Bildung did Harnack hold, that to him they appeared the obvious places for reform to begin. History for Harnack, after all, is always the history of ideas. As he saw his rôle in the eventual reform of the church to be the necessary prior reform of theology, so the reform of German culture would begin with the reform of thought and of education.

So in the end it is as the scholarly preparer-of-the-ground that Harnack makes his contribution to reform, and in that capacity that he had an effect. He knew that, as an historian of the very early church, his work could not but have an impact on the development of Christianity. He writes:

„Wer hier arbeitet, deckt nicht nur eine längst begrabene Vergangenheit auf, sondern arbeitet an der Aufhellung einer Geschichte, deren Hervorbringungen unter uns noch lebendig sind. Darin liegt der Reiz und die Gefahr. Der Kirchenhistoriker wird zum Kirchenpolitiker, er mag wollen oder nicht; denn mag er selbst auch noch so uninteressant sein—den Ergebnissen seiner Arbeiten kann er das ‚Aktuelle‘ nicht absteifen“ [‘Über die jüngst Entdeckungen auf dem Gebiete der Ältesten Kirchengeschichte’, R&A I, pp.315-316].

Harnack believed that one of the tasks of theological scholarship was indeed to have an impact on the church. He points out that protestant theologians used to be arbiters in church matters, but now they are in court themselves, and he maintained that theologians were still needed to guide the church [Thoughts on the Present Position of Protestantism, tr. T.B. Saunders, London 1899, pp.27, 61].

To the sword of the practical reformer Harnack did indeed say no, but one could argue a case for the pen having been in his hand, in the long run, an equally powerful weapon. He took seriously Ritschl's legendary advice on how to have an impact upon theology (and also the church?): "Trust in God, keep your powder dry, and write textbooks!"

i.e: Power as a principle of coherence for the interpretation of Harnack

Even the most cursory reading of Harnack will impress the reader with the frequency of such 'power' words as Kraft, Macht, Gewalt, Ernst, and Energie. At times the words are employed as literary devices, as when he describes the holy energy (heilige Energie) with which St. Paul laboured [WC? 188/DW 118]—a common practice then as now. Also typical of the age are the 'power proverbs' which appear scattered through his work, notably in Das Wesen. Money, he tells us, is compressed force (geronnene Gewalt) [WC? p.85/DW p.54]. Of the Pharisees he complains that, "all that they did was weak, and because weak, harmful," and states that purity (Reinheit) and strength (Ernst) go together [WC? 48/DW 31]. He notes that power has its costs, that we get nothing in history without paying for it, and that a powerful stimulus (eine gewaltsame Bewegung) must be paid for doubly [WC? 285/DW 179]. Of the early Christian notion of being a third race, he comments that though the idea might have repelled some, "...Still it was a token of power, and power never fails to succeed" [M&E I, p.278]. Harnack often speaks of moral and emotional power, such as the power (Macht) of sin [WC? 134/DW 85]. He says of the early Christian community that through the Spirit the elemental forces (elementare Kräfte) of the religious temperament were once again set free [WC? 166/DW 107].

Such language is merely the language of causal agency: were there no more to Harnack's power language, it would contribute little to the task of Harnack interpretation. But the power language occurs with unusual frequency, and at very significant points. It soon becomes clear that the categories of power emerge as central both to Harnack's analysis of history and to his articulation of the Christian message.

In his important essay, 'Über die Sicherheit und Grenzen geschichtlicher Erkenntnis' [R&A nf.4 p. 3f.], Harnack proposes that the basic questions to ask of history are, 1. What powers (*Kräfte*) are at work? 2. What is their direction (*Richtung*)? and 3. What is their effect (*Leistung*)?. Harnack thus expresses his historical method in terms of determining the nature, direction and results of the various powers at work in history. Proof that sensitivity to power factors habitually conditioned Harnack's historical analysis may be found even when no explicit 'power' words are used. The following well-known passage—Harnack's description of the Church in A.D. 200 from What is Christianity?—illustrates the point. Harnack's words appear in normal script, with my commentary in italics:

" We see a great ecclesiastical and political community, and side by side with it numerous 'sects' calling themselves Christian, but denied the name and bitterly opposed. [*The Church has become a political power, engaging in power struggles with other groups.*] That great ecclesiastical and political community presents itself as a league of individual communities spanning the Empire from end to end. Although independent they are all constituted essentially alike, interconnected by one and the same law of doctrine, and by fixed rules for the purposes of intercommunion. [*the power of fixed, objective laws and regulations*] The law of doctrine seems at first sight to be of small scope, but all its tenets are of the widest significance; and together they embrace a profusion of metaphysical, cosmological and historical problems, give them all definite answers, and supply particulars of mankind's development ~~from the creation up to its future form of existence.~~—Jesus' injunctions for the conduct of life are not included in this law of doctrine; as the 'rule of discipline' they were sharply distinguished from the 'rule of faith'. [*The power of Jesus' moral teachings has been superseded by the power of right belief.*]

Each church, however, also presents itself as an institution for public worship, where God is honoured in conformity with a solemn ritual. The distinction between priests and laymen is already a well-marked characteristic of this institution; certain acts of divine worship can be performed only by the priest; his mediation is an absolute necessity. [*The power of priesthood over laity, the power of consecration, the 'power of the keys'*] It is only by mediation that a man can approach God at all, by the mediation of right doctrine, right ordinance and a sacred book. [*The simplicity and directness of the original gospel had the power to bring individuals to God: now they are powerless to come to God without mediation.*]

Harnack continues:

"The living faith seems to be transformed into a creed to be believed; devotion to Christ, into Christology; the ardent hope of the coming of the 'Kingdom' into a doctrine of immortality and 'deification'; [*living piety, religious power, has been transformed into intellectual assent, the power of right belief*] prophecy into technical exegesis and theological learning; the ministers of the Spirit into clerics; [*spiritual power and immediacy had been transformed amongst Christian leaders into office-holding*] the brothers, into laymen in a state of tutelage; [*the new powerlessness of the majority of the community*] miracles and miraculous cures disappear altogether, or else are priestly devices; fervent prayers become solemn hymns and litanies; the 'Spirit' becomes law and compulsion. [*outward signs of spiritual power disappear or are domesticated; loss of emotional power—from the fervent to the solemn—replacement of spiritual power—the Spirit—with temporal power—law and compulsion*] At the same time individual Christians are in full touch with the life of the world, and the burning question is, 'In how much of this life may I take part without losing my position as a Christian?' [*The power of the world is regaining its hold upon the Christian community*]" [WC? 192-193].

Harnack alludes to several different kinds of power in this passage, but his central theme is that there has been a shift of powers in the church, a transpotentiation, from the spiritual and immediate to the human and institutional. The passage is permeated with a sense of struggle and conflict, of loss and indignation.

This thesis argues that the ubiquitous power language in Harnack is of significance, and that concepts of power form the matrix of his thought. The recurring themes of the dynamism of history, of the 'upward' movement of civilisation, of ideas as forces which can generate explosive conflict, of conflicts generating energy and change, are all power themes. History is viewed as the clash and interplay of various powers, and in it all, and in religion explicitly, is seen 'the power of God'. 'The essence of the gospel' is the phrase most people would associate with Harnack; but it should be noted that it is used interchangeably with 'the power of the gospel' and that the latter, with its variants, is the more common phrase. One is justified in speaking of these motifs in Harnack in terms of power rather than simply of dynamism or teleology for several reasons. The first is that they are the terms in which he himself so frequently chose to speak. The second is that for Harnack, behind the dynamism of history stands a person: that dynamism is in fact a personal function—an exercise of the will of the creator spiritus. 'Veni Creator Spiritus' was the motto Harnack chose for his coat of arms and for his epitaph [AZH, pp. 337, 566]. The conviction that behind all the 'progress' and upward movement of history, the energy and dynamism of life and world and culture lay a personal will was of great importance to him. In view of this, and because the exercise of will is central to most theories of power it is correct in this instance to speak of the dynamism of history and culture in power terms. The third reason why it is appropriate to describe Harnack's thought in terms of power is that prominent in it are the themes

of conflict and resistance. Harnack might not have wholeheartedly assented to his contemporary Max Weber's insistence that human affairs were a relentless struggle for power, but Weber's classic definition of power, to which the notion of resistance is central, would have resonated with his own.¹ Where one analyses history in terms of the exercise of personal will and in terms of conflict and resistance, it is appropriate to speak the language of power.

We have attempted to demonstrate that Harnack's analysis of history proceeds in terms of power, and in the quotation above we offer an example of how Harnack handles an historical phenomenon with a view to exposing its power dynamics. His work abounds with similar examples.² Harnack's primary power interest was the power of God and the powerfulness/effectiveness of the gospel. More specifically, he celebrates the power of the gospel—a liberating, creative and transforming power, expressed in and accessible through the teachings and personality of Jesus—and contrasts this, as noted above, with the constraining and deadening effects of other ostensibly religious powers such as tradition, authority and dogma. He explores the gospel's superiority to and ability to triumph over the negative, impersonal forces of mortality and insignificance for which his shorthand is the term 'nature', and in affirming the ultimate power of God, not only in theory or as a future hope, but as demonstrated in God's role as 'the Lord of history', he asserts the superiority of the kind of power unleashed through the gospel over economic, military, political, social and organisational powers of every kind. 'The power of the gospel' for Harnack is not another general expression for the plausibility or effectiveness of Christianity. It indicates rather a particular experience of empowering, an energising effected by the electrifying contact of 'God and the soul; the soul and its God'.

The question must arise as to why a concern with power, and with power understood in this specific way, should constitute a particular focus for Harnack's thought and work. Several factors no doubt played their part. ~~The first would be its accordance with Harnack's personal religious~~ experience, shaped by a Lutheranism with strongly pietistic elements. Another factor was Harnack's commitment to understanding Christianity on the basis of history rather than metaphysics. His epistemological pragmatism and his Lutheran-pietist roots would here tend in the same direction; for in both views it is the demonstrable effectiveness of one's religion under the conditions of this world that matters, in other words, its ability to produce a new life. A third factor lies in the apologetic resonance of interpreting Christianity in terms of power. Power was a subject which current intellectual, political and economic developments had placed in the foreground of peoples' thought, and so an apologetic which spoke in terms of power stood a good chance of holding the attention and of being understood. Developments in nineteenth-century theology also played their part in focussing Harnack's attention on 'the power of the gospel'. Troeltsch points out that prior to the enlightenment the church established its proofs of the divine power in terms of miracle and the fulfillment of prophecy, but that when it departed from a strong emphasis on external proofs, the internal, psychological miracle of divine power working within the soul became much more important [The Absoluteness of Christianity, London, S.C.M., 1972 p.60]. Another factor which would force

Harnack's attention to the subject of power was his distress about the misuses of power which were so evident to him in Christian history and in the present, in the catholic church and in his own as well. Here his vocation as an ideological track-layer for the continuation of the reformation comes into play. 'We study history in order to intervene in history' (R&A nf.4. p.7; AZH p.57): thus in refocussing the attention of theology upon the central, fundamental issue of divine power and its accessibility to humankind Harnack is engaged in a power task himself, on behalf of the power of God.

When Harnack emphasises power as central to the Christian religion he is not doing anything new, but rather affirming the simplest and most basic message of the Christian tradition, of an almighty God, of Jesus as Lord, of the gospel as active and transforming. What is less common, and most valuable about Harnack's approach is that he attempts to probe and articulate what exactly is meant by the claims of power made by Christianity. He tries to describe what kind of power God exercises in the world, to explain how it was that the first Christians could look at the humble circumstances of Jesus' life and recognise the Son of God, and most especially to delineate how the gospel empowers and transforms individuals. The attempt to do this kind of unpacking is fraught with danger, and it is evident that Harnack made mistakes. As Sykes notes in his comparison of Harnack with Loisy, clarity is always vulnerable when compared to unclarity [Identity, p.139]. Christian apologetics, however, owes its existence to those who have had the courage to make the attempt.

One cannot get away from power language in Harnack, and the only question is rightly to determine its significance. The frameworks that have been used to interpret Harnack's theology to date have been unequal to their task not least because they do not let him speak clearly for himself. In seeking an adequate way in to the interpretation of Harnack's constructive theology, what better place to start could there be than to pay attention to the obvious, to the ubiquitous power language, and to probe it to ascertain whether the language of power and the concepts of power in fact give rise to a theology of power?

Notes to Chapter One (Introduction)

1.a. (Biography)

1. Theodosius Harnack, Luther's Theologie mit besonderer Beziehung auf seine Versöhnungs- und Erlösungslehre, vol.I, 1862, vol.II, 1886, 2nd. ed. 1927.

2. Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, Adolf von Harnack, Berlin, Hans Bött Verlag, 1936, p.49 (2nd ed. 1951); hereinafter referred to as AZH. see also G. Wayne Glick, The Reality of Christianity: A Study of Adolf von Harnack as Historian and Theologian, New York, Harper & Row, 1967, p.29: hereinafter cited as Glick, Reality.

3. Dorpat was a stronghold of Lutheran orthodoxy, and toward the end of his studies there Harnack began to feel restless in an atmosphere where doubts were regarded as tokens of insincerity. Biographer Agnes von Zahn-Harnack maintains that Harnack broke with his Dorpat teachers on several issues. In Christology, he rejected the idea of pre-existence and held that the proper way to perceive Jesus was not via speculative categories but through his worth for us as his disciples [AZH pp.93-95]. With regard to the worth of the ecclesiastical tradition, he held that, like all other historical movements, the tradition had undergone a process of rationalisation, levelling and deterioration which meant that what we possess today is far different from the original [ibid p.96]. He differed from orthodoxy also on the nature of the sacraments, and gave only a qualified acceptance to the Lutheran confessional writings, and he expressed the forgiveness of sins as simply the negative aspect of the more comprehensive blessing of eternal life [ibid. pp.93-99]. Finally, Harnack became convinced that being a Christian is not so much a matter of believing the correct doctrines as of living a life in which God is trusted as Father [ibid. pp. 102-105].

4. The reaction to Harnack's answer was extreme. - The Kaiser demanded an immediate report, and Harnack was called to give an account of himself to Bosse, head of the Kultusministerium, in which the principle of Lehrfreiheit was upheld [AZH p.205f]. The 'orthodox' as a result of the Streit demanded and got the establishment of another theological chair in Berlin, and Harvard University offered Harnack a chair for the second time, assuring him of the prospect there of complete freedom of thought and speech. Harnack declined and notified the government of his decision, writing, in words that have an irony for us today, that hopefully the time would never come when a lack of academic freedom would drive a Prussian from his fatherland [AZH p.210].

5. Friedrich Smend, Adolf von Harnack: Verzeichnis seiner Schriften, Leipzig, 1927; 2nd ed. Leipzig, 1931, with an appendix by Axel von Harnack. The works of greatest significance for this thesis will be indicated in section 1.b. below.

6. Neufeld notes that the Fälle should not be understood as personal 'Affären', but as crystallisations of the conflict between the contemporary intellectual understanding of Christianity offered by Geistesgeschichte and the ecclesiastical status quo: see Karl H. Neufeld, Adolf Harnack's Konflikt mit der Kirche: Weg-Stationen zum „Wesen des Christentums“, Innsbrück-Wien-München, Tyrolia, 1979, p.13-14.

7. AZH pp.215-227; see also W.R. Ward, Theology, Sociology and Politics: the German Protestant Social Conscience 1890-1933, Bern, Peter Lang, 1979, pp. 37, 55-71 et passim. Among the issues addressed by the Kongress Harnack was especially concerned with education, including the education of women, and used his influence to encourage reforms [AZH pp.221, 318].

8. On Harnack's ecumenical activity: relations with the Roman Catholic church see AZH pp.406f, 412-416, 542f; on his enthusiasm for the post-war ecumenical movement see *ibid.* p.538-544; see also, 'Was wir von der römischen Kirche lernen und nicht lernen sollen' [written 1891, R&A bd. II, p.247f.]; 'Protestantismus und Katholizismus in Deutschland' [written 1907, R&A nf. I, pp.228-250]; 'Über den sogenannten „Consensus quinque-saecularis“ als Grundlage der Wiedervereinigung der Kirchen' [R&A Werk.]; 'Die Weltkonferenz für Glaube und Verfassung' Christliche Welt 40, pp.722-724 (1926)].

9. These developments include the move away from concern with an historical understanding of Christianity towards a focus upon individual religious experience in search of das Religiöse überhaupt, and the rise of the religionsgeschichtliche Schule.

10. Harnack kept in touch with him after his abdication, and sent him regular reports of the research foundation that, thanks to Harnack's efforts, continued to bear his name [AZH pp.493-494].

1b: (Methodology)

1. Ringer's evidence suggests that even with regard to politics any idea of a 'Damascus road conversion' for Harnack is inaccurate: he was a modernist social reformer even before the war. [*ibid.* pp 133,190-193].

2. For example, see 'Über das Verhältnis der Kirchengeschichte zur Universalgeschichte', R&A nf.2 pp.61, 62 (written 1904) ; also 'Über die Sicherheit und die Grenzen geschichtlicher Erkenntnis' R&A nf.4 pp.3f, 8 (written 1917); and 'on John 16;12,14' ST , pp.222-224 (written 1918).

3. Roberts suggests that German culture at the turn of the century was, "...racked by a longing and striving for forms of self-transcendence," and that this, "...forms the background to the astounding success of Harnack's What is Christianity?" [R. Roberts 'The Reception of the Theology of Karl Barth in the Anglo-Saxon World: History, Typology and Prospect', typescript, University of Durham, 1987, p.301].

4. Axel von Harnack's introduction to the final volume (Werk.) published with Harnack's permission but after his death, maintains that the collection meant a great deal to Harnack, and that he wished to be known as much by its contents as by that of Das Wesen.

1.c. Harnack as systematic theologian

1. Neufeld devotes a section of the bibliography of his second book on Harnack specifically to the literature engendered by the debate about Das Wesen. Yet even this is not a full list, the abundance of the material having compelled selection, but it serves to indicate the dimensions of the debate [Neufeld (1979), pp.17, 181].

2. The following year Glick supplemented his work on Harnack with an important article, „Ich bin kein Reformator“, aber... [in J.C. Brauer, ed. The Impact of the Church upon its Culture: Reappraisals in the History of Christianity, U.Chicago Press, 1968, pp.353-382]. The content is dealt with extensively elsewhere in the thesis [see 1.d. below].

3. There are times, as in his discussion of the Babel-Bibel controversy, when Glick wilfully misunderstands the simple grammatical sense of Harnack's words in order to find evidence for his theses [p.230f]. And in the discussion of the Barth-Harnack controversy, Glick emotively mistranslates the title of Harnack's Fifteen Questions, directing them to the 'betrayers' of scientific theology [p.223]. The word is 'Verächter', which Rumscheidt renders more correctly as 'despisers' [H.M. Rumscheidt, Revelation and Theology: An analysis of the Barth-Harnack correspondence of 1923, Cambridge, 1972, p.29]. Glick's translation carries a sense of hysterical accusation: Rumscheidt's a sense of defense in the face of injury, and I would argue that the difference in tone makes a difference to how readers would reflect upon Harnack's character and motives in this instance.

4. At times Glick appears to have some insight into the inevitability of this state of things. For instance he writes, after criticising Harnack for intruding his Humanitätsideal into his interpretation of the gospel:

"And if Harnack intruded a Humanitätsideal in his identification of 'the reality of Christianity' (his kerygma), controlling the historical materials as he did, the modern who views this intrusion as a mistake and substitutes his culturally efficacious 'biblical kerygma' would be well advised to hold the mirror to his own viewpoint. One cannot escape the conviction that a good deal of 'culturally relevant' theology is not only loaded with its own Humanitätsideal, but lacks the historical sophistication which Harnack possessed" [p.344].

5. D.W. Lotz notes that, while delineating clearly how Harnack's axiology shapes his writing of history, "...Glick himself does not sufficiently consider how history also determines axiology—i.e., that Harnack's specific understanding of the historical method necessitated an axiology as the solution to the critical historian's dilemma" [D.W. Lotz review in Union Seminary Quarterly Review 23 (Spring 1968) p.288: see also 1.d.].

6. It is a surprise to find that in his second book Neufeld reverses the judgment he made on Das Wesen in his first work (i.e. that it is a 'haute vulgarisation' of very secondary importance) and makes of it the pinnacle of Harnack's existential development as a theologian. What emerges is a view of the Fälle which sees them as stages in a theological and existential journey which culminates in the production of Das Wesen.

7. Neufeld makes frequent use of 'Kraft' in elucidating Harnack's theology and quotes many of Harnack's important 'power passages'. He repeatedly refers to the inner Dynamik of the gospel, by which he means the actually becoming Christ-like (Christsein) rather than the static embracing of an intellectual truth. Neufeld insists that for Harnack Christianity in its essence is not embraced in objective Gegebenheiten which can be put into sentences, but in the Dynamik of a new life [Neufeld (1977) p.60]. The constant emphasis on gelebte Evangelium, existentielle Evangelium, and the equally constant emphasis on the freedom of the Christian from the compulsion of nature and the world all allude to power themes, as does Neufeld's statement that Harnack imputed worth above all to the inneren Kräfte of the preaching of Jesus, but was more reserved about and critical of the external Kräfte which cooperated in the shaping of the church [Neufeld (1977) p.287].

8. That for Harnack the church was a major interest no one would wish to deny, but he was interested in the church not for its own sake, but as the social consequence of and the missionary vehicle for the gospel, and it is with the transforming power of the gospel that his deepest theological and apologetic concerns lie [see i.e. below]. Neufeld rightly stresses the potentially revolutionary implications of Harnack's work for the shape of the church of the future, but he errs in attributing too much weight to Harnack's call for a third kind of church, and in order to delineate the positive Kirchenprogramm which he insists Harnack holds, Neufeld is forced to press the evidence too hard [see Neufeld (1977) p.356-357]. In any event, Harnack said that he considered it the task of the next generation to renew the church: the task of his own generation was the renewal of theology [see i.d.].

9. Neufeld's strong attribution of causality to biographical factors in Harnack is the more ironic as he criticises others for being too 'biographical' in their approach to him. Neufeld forgets that Harnack's unorthodox views predate his ecclesiastical isolation and rejection and were the cause of it, rather than vice versa. It is also a mistake to attribute Harnack's vigorous activity in 'the world' primarily to his rejection by the church. Kaltenborn bears witness to the fact, which Neufeld himself to some extent recognises, that Harnack held a very Lutheran and positive concept of Christian Liebesdienst, in which the Christian, freed from the zwingende Pflicht of nature and the world, is enabled to work in the world as God's joyful Mitarbeiter. As Neufeld stresses, Harnack indeed desired to serve the church, but in Harnack's view God's business is ultimately with the world: the church is to be an instrument in God's hand for the service and education of the world. Thus for Harnack, work in the world has its own positive raison d'etre.

10. Harnack, in company with Ritschl, made many dark pronouncements on the subject of nature, but it rapidly becomes clear that when he does so he is using the word in a very specialised way which does not reflect upon the goodness of creation. Harnack's objections to catholic sacramental doctrine have as much to do with politics and power as with creation—with the pinning-down of divine grace to specific and exclusive things and places, with the exultation of correct ritual form over the disposition of the heart and the building of clerical monopolies over access to divine grace—all of which Harnack saw as antithetical to the directness and immediacy of the gospel [see Neufeld (1977) p.320; also ch.5]. That Harnack spiritualised the sacraments and related components of Christianity is true, and whether this is a fault in him is debatable, but his reasons for doing so are not what Neufeld suggests.

11. Of Barth and Brunner, two of Harnack's most influential critics, he writes; „Wir sind der Meinung, dass die Kritik dieser Theologen an Ritschl und Harnack ungerecht und unzutreffend ist, und dass eine sinnvolle Kritik anders sein sollte,“ [ibid. p.62-63, see also p.65-68]. Especially he notes the inconsistency in Barth's fierce criticism of Ritschl (and by extension Harnack) for his abjuration of metaphysics in view of the fact that the rejection and surmounting of all natural theology is one of the chief themes of his own work [p.65], and the fact that in spite of this Barth can only arrive at his conception of the being of God in revelation by means of an extensive use of metaphysical concepts [p.67]. Meijering reaches the conclusion that Brunner has misunderstood Harnack from the outset, and demonstrates by reference to Harnack's writings how repeatedly the views which Brunner recommends to him as correctives, Harnack already in fact holds [p.70-71]. Brunner gives the impression that Harnack's theological position is entirely passé [ibid. p.72-73]. Meijering insists that this is not true, and that Brunner himself is the proof of it, holding that those who were unfamiliar with Brunner's verdict on Harnack, and who read Dogmatik after reading Dogmengeschichte, would conclude that Brunner was a Musterschüler of Harnack's [ibid. p.73-74]. Meijering further contends that the way for the renewal of reformed faith which was the goal of dialectical theology was prepared by Ritschl and above all by Harnack [ibid.].

12. Irscher calls for an expansion of the Smend bibliography of 1931, which is incomplete [p.4], and for the production of a 'wissenschaftliches Biography', maintaining that Agnes von Zahn-Harnack's work, though a rich source of information, partakes too much of the genre of hagiography [p.5]. Along with the barrier between sacred and profane history, Irscher notes that other barriers which Harnack broke down were those between the 'Fathers' and the heretics, and between antique (i.e. graeco-roman) culture and the surrounding Randkulturen—ethiopian, arabic, armenian, coptic, old-slavic, and syrian [p.11,13]. While not surprisingly critical of theology for its narrowness, Irscher equally criticises classical studies for its continuing neglect of the early Christian components of antiquity [p.14].

13. Dummer points out that over one quarter of all Harnack's publications for the Academy concerned New Testament problems [p.22-24] and that he wrote extensively on New Testament subjects elsewhere, yet no serious attempt has been made, beyond quoting him in relation to particular Einzelfragen, to determine Harnack's position in the history of New

Testament scholarship [ibid.]. Dummer has also performed a valuable service to Harnack scholarship by rendering the Sitzungsberichte material more accessible, having extracted and published it in a two-volume Arbeitsausgabe entitled, Adolf von Harnack: Kleine Schriften zur alten Kirche [Leipzig, Zentralantiquariat der DDR, 1980].

1.d. (Harnack as apologist and reformer)

1. Though he held the chair of church history in Berlin, it was as an historical scholar that Harnack was elected to the Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften [AZH p.252] and as an historian that he received the Orden pour le Mérite, an honour for which theologians were expressly ineligible [ibid.p 279-280].

2. see Sykes, Identity, chapter 9, 'Analysis of the Essence Discussion', especially pp.219-238; also F. Courth, Das Wesen des Christentums in der liberalen Theologie: dargestellt am Werk Fr. Schleiermachers, Ferd. Chr. Baur und A. Ritschls, Frankfurt, Lang, 1977, especially pp.1-6.

1.e. (Power as a principle of coherence for the interpretation of Harnack)

1. Weber's definition holds that power [Macht] is; "...the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis upon which this probability rests" Economy and Society, ed. G. Roth & C. Wittich, Berkeley/Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1978, vol.1 p.53.

2. His discussion, in the tenth lecture of What is Christianity?, of the chiliastic expectations of the early church demonstrates this point. He maintains that these expectations were mistaken, but insists that we also realise how valuable they were for raising the disciples above the world, teaching them to value the great things over the small and to distinguish what is of time from what is of eternity. Harnack presents this as an example of a recurring phenomenon in the history of religion, in which a 'new and powerful religious impulse', a power in its own right, is associated with a coefficient power (Koeffizient) which enhances and strengthens it. Other examples include the new piety and devotion of St. Francis, strengthened by the doctrine of poverty, and the thought of St. Augustine, in which the central power of a religious experience of sin and grace is strengthened by the coefficient of predestination. Similarly the Puritan movement was strengthened by the consciousness of adoption [WC? 172-173/DW 108].

CHAPTER TWO: HARNACK AND POWER: QUESTIONS AND DEFINITIONS

2.a. Introduction

In 1.e. above we offered possible reasons for Harnack making power a primary interpretive category for his understanding of Christianity, and further reasons, arising from Harnack's historical context, will be discussed in 2.c. below. It is necessary now to examine the subject of power more closely at a theoretical level.

There is no agreement among social scientists about how power language is to be used. There are no definitive experts to consult, and theologians must find their own way amongst the many treatments of power available.' Among the works which proved to be particularly useful was Dennis Wrong's Power: Its forms, bases and uses (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1979; 2nd. ed. 1988), which offers a good standard treatment of power at a theoretical level, to which we shall return. As a working definition of power with which to begin, however, Max Weber's is still adequate, i.e. that power is: "...the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis upon which this probability rests". With this definition a penumbra of qualifying terms begins to develop around the bare word 'power': social relationship, will, resistance. More will follow. The inference that there may be many different bases for the probability of one actor's supremacy points to the truth that power comes in many and varied forms. It is in the differentiation of these forms that we find Wrong's book of use. While many social scientists have laid out typologies of power, Wrong's is among the best for its comprehensiveness and clarity.

For most people the notion of power is inextricably connected with force: power means the ability to coerce. Wrong reminds us that many types of power—competent authority and charismatic authority, for example—involve little coercion. He also impresses upon us that power occurs within relationships and involves some degree of cooperation and reciprocity. This emphasis suggests that power can also mean the ability to accomplish. Wrong arranges his types of power along a continuum for which the degree of coercion and the degree of relationship form the variables.

Social scientists and political theorists deal with social, interpersonal types of power. This perspective is emphasised by Michael Mann's definition of power in terms of different means of organisation to promote goal-attainment (The Sources of Social Power: A history of power from the beginning to A.D. 1760, vol.I, Cambridge University Press, 1986). This approach, however, neglects those powers which are generated and operative in the first instance within the individual rather than between persons and groups. Psychology makes a contribution in this area, and psychotherapist Rollo May's work on the connexions between personal powerlessness and violence, Power and Innocence: A search for the sources of violence, [New York, W.W. Norton & Co., 1972] proved instructive. In addition, the high profile which Mann gives to ideological power begins to broaden the usual sociological perspective, though while he touches on the importance for this kind of power of the quest for meaning, he mainly stresses the functions of ideological power in promoting group solidarity

and adherence to social norms. For theologians a discussion of power will include the intrapersonal as well as the interpersonal frame of reference, and in a way different from that of psychology, for it includes the possibility of transcendence and entertains the idea of sources of power other than the natural or human.

Harnack understood social, political and organisational powers: he used them himself and chronicled their effects upon the history of Christianity. But in developing his constructive theology it is the interior dimensions of power which concern him most and where he is most original.

2.b. Perspectives from the social sciences: Wrong, Mann, Berger

While a survey of contemporary social science literature on the subject of power is beyond the scope of this thesis, the work of Wrong, Mann and Berger has helped to provide a context for understanding Harnack's strategies with regard to power. As noted above, Wrong's typology proves instructive, as does his understanding of the interrelations of power. For Mann, Harnack is a major source of information about the history of Christianity, and Berger writes with direct reference to Harnack.

Wrong

Wrong's opening definition of power is, "...the capacity of some persons to produce intended and foreseen effects on others' [Wrong, p.2.]. He specifically excludes from his study the areas of power in the natural sciences or the power over the self which is the realm of psychology [ibid., but cf. the introduction to the 2nd edition]. Wrong uses and expands Weberian insights, with an emphasis on resistance [pp.2, 21], intentionality [p.3], and a particular interest in authority [pp.35f]. His typology of power—force, manipulation, persuasion—moves from that employing the greatest degree of coercion to the least, and the least amount of cooperation and reciprocity to the greatest, and the pattern is repeated for authority—coercive, induced, legitimate, competent, personal.

Despite the differences in discipline and in the methodological standpoint with regard to transcendence, Wrong illuminates Harnack in several ways. This is perhaps to be expected given the proximity of Harnack to Weber. Harnack and Weber were contemporaries and co-nationals, were active in the same political causes, and had a mutual friend and colleague in Troeltsch'. Harnack refers his readers to Weber's Protestant Ethics and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism for an answer to the question of the share which should be assigned to Christianity in the protracted changes which in the course of history have revolutionised social class, labour and social organisation [M&E II p. 336 n.1]. Citation indicates that Harnack possessed at least a basic knowledge of Weber's thought. Though Weber's work was the more sophisticated and explicit on the subject of power, there is considerable common ground in their approaches. Both make resistance an important component in their power definitions, and emphasise the rôle of conflict in history. Both also have a special interest in authority, as Wrong translates Weber's Herrschaft, which was also a word Harnack used to describe the power of God.

We shall find Wrong useful at many points in the investigation. His categories of authority help to illuminate and contextualise the types of power in Christianity which most concerned Harnack. They particularly serve to illustrate Harnack's view of what happened over time to the kinds of social power exercised in the church. A further contribution is the light they shed on Harnack's own tacit claim to power as an historical theologian 'authorised' to interpret the past [see ch.6, 7].

In discussing the 'zero-sum' debate Wrong helps to throw Harnack's general attitude towards power into relief [Wrong, pp.237f]. The debate is between 'conflict' theoreticians, such as C. Wright Mills, who hold that power is essentially power over others, and the 'consensus' theoreticians, represented classically by Talcott Parsons, who maintain that power is essentially power to do, with power over others being secondary and derivative. Harnack's inclination was to the latter theory, not only because of his optimistic mandarin assessment of society as a social contract, but also because such a definition of power accords more exactly with the internal, psychological powers which interested him most. Yet, as we shall see, in both the political and the interior worlds he was not blind to the existence of conflict, and inner power, while primarily 'power to', is also, with regard to the negatives of sin and mortality, 'power over'.

Wrong has less to offer us regarding the question of power within the individual. Wrong insists on the relational character of power. Harnack well understood the relational dimension of spiritual power, for everything in his theological scheme depends on the interchange between God and the soul, conditioned by the personality of Christ. It is the character of God and God's relation to the soul as Father which is the source of spiritual power. But without denying the relational character of power, Harnack would also insist that ultimately the power-event occurs within, not between individuals. To adapt a favourite Harnackean metaphor in the case of charismatic authority, the power of one personality 'kindles' another: a spark indeed passes between the individuals, but the fires burn separately.

Michael Mann

Historical sociologist Michael Mann, in the first volume of The Sources of Social Power: A history of power from the beginning to AD 1760 [Cambridge University Press, 1986] follows the Weberian line in insisting that power should not be treated as a self-existent entity. He defines it as a word used to describe various means of organisation for goal-attainment which have developed and changed over time. Mann argues that social power of any intensity arose only with the development of civilisation. He makes a strong case for a Marxist theory of the first origins of power and civilisation—i.e. that the 'original' form of power was economic, and that the other main types of power—military, political, and ideological—developed from this. Mann in no way, however, underestimates the powerfulness of the 'later' forms of power. Of especial interest to us, he chronicles the rise of ideological power in the period beginning 600 BC, concentrating on the emergence of Christianity as the example for which we have the best documentation [see ch. 10, pp. 364f.]. For his

information on Christian history he chooses to draw in great measure upon Harnack's Mission and Expansion and Troeltsch's Social Teachings.

Mann's theory of the rise of ideological power is as follows: ideological power could not, in his view, become a force capable of influencing the shape of history until certain organisational and infrastructural preconditions were met. These included a well-developed system of communications and a relatively high level of literacy such as came into being in the wake of the mature empires of domination (e.g. Assyria, Persia, Rome). Another precondition was also a by-product of empire and the enforced mixing of cultures which it entailed, that is, a growing sense of the oneness and basic similarity of all human beings. A third precondition was the existence of individuals and groups who were marginal, or interstitial, to the traditional groupings of society, such as the artisans and traders in the Roman Empire who were largely denied meaningful communal association and who were thirsty for belonging and identity. Where such conditions are present, Mann argues, the way is clear for articulate individuals to supply new explanations of the meaning of individual and social existence, and ideological power is born. Though chronologically a late-comer on the scene, ideological power is indeed power: individuals and groups become willing to sacrifice economic, military and political advantages in order to meet its demands.

Mann's theory throws into relief what shall soon be evident as Harnack's unquestioning assumption of the priority and supremacy of ideological power with regard to any other kind of power. In suggesting rather humbler human origins for ideological power, it indicates a way of overcoming the dichotomy which makes itself apparent in Harnack's works between divine/spiritual and human/worldly power. What Mann does not do is to offer an explanation of the rise of the charismatic individual whose articulacy creates the new ideology. How do such individuals come into being and develop perspectives and explanations for existence quite different from those traditionally available? The fact of marginality alone is not sufficient to explain them. In short, what is the nature of their inspiration? This is a question which because of its methodological constraints social science is not equipped to answer.

This omission points once again to the issue of transcendence. Mann indeed uses the term in his interpretation of ideological power, but it gradually becomes clear that for him transcendence means sociospatial transcendence only, that is, the pointing of humanity to a real or imagined fundamental unity which disregards limitations of space, time and culture. This kind of transcendence in Mann's view is the very power of ideological power, but while noting its attractiveness and plausibility he never asks why it should be so. Mann maintains that in the period under discussion this transcendence took a religious form, with the 'divine' as the imaginative projection of social realities [p.20]. Harnack would wish to argue that the human feeling of transcendence has a real referent—the common relatedness of all human beings to the spirit of God at work in history.

The two are agreed that an analysis of history in which the concept of power plays the central rôle is the correct way to proceed, but their understandings of what power is and how it operates diverge sharply. For Harnack, power is something which arises within individuals and moves outwards to influence society and the natural world. For Mann, restlessness and the desire for goal-attainment may be inherent in and arise from within individuals, but power arises among individuals as they organise and cooperate in the reshaping of both human society and the natural world to attain common goals. Even the most inward of powers, the religious experience, he would trace ultimately back to this form of social cooperation for the purposes of material goal-attainment. The movement of power in Harnack is from 'within' to 'outside': in Mann from 'among' to 'outside' and 'within'.

Peter Berger: theological strategies for addressing the nature of divine power

When theologians write about divine or spiritual power they usually do so with hesitancy and imprecision. The heated and detailed discussions about power among theologians usually concern themselves with the power of the church as institution or with questions of appropriate human authority and leadership within the church. Even those who have become critical and urbane about social and political power continue to handle spiritual power in a simplistic manner. By radicals it is 'debunked' and declared only to be a mythic legitimization of the altogether human power of the church. By fundamentalists and the unsophisticated orthodox, it is celebrated as a kind of magical electricity, offering deus ex machina solutions, and though phrases like 'the power of God' and 'the power of the Spirit' are scattered liberally through their works, actual discussion of the nature and method of operation of divine power tends to be sparse and stereotyped. Theologians who are at neither of these extremes wrestle, often inarticulately, with the possibility that spiritual power exists, but that our notions of it require reassessment after Kant and Freud. They seek not only, with the fundamentalists, to affirm the fact that spiritual power exists and is available to us and to show how we can avail ourselves of it, but also to describe what spiritual power can and cannot effect, and to explain how it does what it does.

The attempt to examine and explain spiritual power is often viewed with suspicion as evidence of 'liberalism' if not of blasphemy. But because the subject is of vital importance apologetically, theologians of all persuasions are impelled at some point to address the problem. Sociologist/theologian Peter Berger maintains that when they make the attempt to deal with the phenomenon of the power of God and of the spiritual power active in and available to believers, theologians adopt varying strategies, and his book, The Heretical Imperative [London, Collins, 1980], makes a valuable attempt to systematise the chaos. Though having a slightly wider frame of reference than that of divine/spiritual power, his work is fully applicable to this area. He suggests that there are three main approaches to the problem, and in studying these we can reach a better appreciation of the context and method of Harnack's attempt.

Berger takes a phenomenological starting-point. Experiences of the supernatural and the sacred create ruptures in mundane reality and give rise to new perceptions of the self and others. Echoing Weber's 'routinisation of charisma', he notes that religious experience, which is initially self-authenticating, inevitably over time becomes embodied in religious tradition which becomes an authority, supported by social institutions, consensus and control [Berger, *ibid.*, pp.46-48]. But, he notes, our situation, the religious situation of modernity, is one of pluralism, of a choice to be made from among competing traditions. This poses a threat to the realness, security and objectivity of each and all traditions [see *ibid.*, ch.11].

Berger's emphasis on the challenge of pluralism fits Harnack's situation well. While religious pluralism had been to some extent a feature of German life since the Reformation, first the enlightenment, and then the ideological ramifications of industrial capitalism and the concomitant rise of an unchurched marxist social democratic movement had increased the number of alternative explanations and the sharpness of their divergence. Theologians of all persuasions felt the need to 'defend the faith' in this situation [Ward, p.40].

In the face of the threat of pluralism Berger outlines three possible strategies. The first is the deductive possibility, in which, "...the tradition is affirmed anew, after an interval when it was not affirmed. The problem is, quite simply, that it is very difficult to forget the interval...This is why neotraditional and neo-orthodox movements come on with particular vehemence..." [Berger, p.68]. The example of this possibility which Berger uses is that of Karl Barth's protestant neo-orthodoxy, in which the Word of God is the datum of Christian theology. Faith in the Word is the starting-point: there is no way there, no method of knowing God, no natural human capacity to know God. Only the Word gives one the capacity to affirm it [*ibid.*, p.74f]. Christianity's uniqueness and validity are simply given, a priori [*ibid.*, pp.83-84]. Because it has been questioned in liberal protestantism, the authority of the tradition must now be reasserted with great force. If one can accomplish this, the gain is cognitive certainty and one can once again deduce propositions from the old tradition [*ibid.*, p.79].

The second response is the reductive possibility, that of modernising tradition. Starting from the assumption that modern consciousness cannot accept the supernatural (and the assumption that this constitutes an epistemological advance), but desiring to salvage at least the core of the tradition, this strategy engages in 'cognitive bargaining' and effects a 'translation' of the supernatural elements of the tradition, sometimes into ethics or mystical experience (e.g. classical liberalism), existential categories (e.g. Bultmann), psychology (e.g. Norman Vincent Peale and other Americans in the nineteen fifties), or politics (e.g. liberation theology) [*ibid.* pp.111-117]. Here the a priori's are the cognitive superiority of modern consciousness [*ibid.* p.119f] and the conviction that if 'the gods' are indeed discovered to be symbols of human realities, then this implies that they are nothing but symbols [*ibid.* p.121-123].

The third response is the inductive possibility—a moving from tradition to experience. When the tradition comes to be questioned, this strategy seeks to trace back to the experiences which began it. Thus history and the analysis of religious consciousness become important. It takes human experience as the appropriate and only available starting-point for religious reflection and uses the methods of the historian to uncover those human experiences which have become embodied in the various religious traditions [ibid., p.125-126]. Schleiermacher and the liberal protestantism which drew from him are the paradigmatic examples of this strategy [ibid., pp.127f]. Berger cites Harnack as the single most representative figure of the (inductive) historical impulse in nineteenth-century protestant theology [ibid., pp.137f], searching for the essence of Christianity, that is, the core experiences of Christianity. (Harnack's Erlebnis equals Schleiermacher's Gefühl [ibid. p.138, n.24]).

Berger's three strategies prove to be a reasonable 'fit' with the ways theologians approach the task of affirming the divine power in a milieu where acceptance of its reality can no longer be taken for granted. Barth and neo-orthodoxy generally follow the deductive strategy, using the language of power about God easily and unashamedly, with few attempts to explain what is meant or how divine power impinges on this world. In this they offer us no advance, vis-a-vis the new intellectual milieu, beyond orthodox tradition.

A few adopt a reductive approach: in addition to Bultmann, Feuerbach and Overbeck offer the most obvious examples. More recently, Walter Wink takes a primarily reductive approach to the subject of 'principalities and powers' [Naming the Powers, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1986]. Berger offers Norman Vincent Peale [The Power of Positive Thinking, New York, Prentice-Hall, 1952 et.al.] as an example of reduction, saying that he 'translates' the divine story into psychology, into principles of growth and wholeness for the individual. This is not in my view fair to Peale².

When the subject is spiritual power the inductive strategy appears to be practised in two different ways. The first is intellectual and analytical, and fits easily into Berger's description: i.e. through history and reflection on the historically-given religious experiences of humanity, seeking to describe the core-experiences of divine power. But there is a second variant which also deserves the adjective inductive. It is more active, and emphasises the possibility—indeed the necessity—of confirming and supplementing historical analysis by seeking direct religious experience at first hand. Such an approach, characteristic of many mystical, fundamentalist and charismatic writers, attempts to authenticate the traditional truth-claims about the power of God by demonstrating that power in the present³.

As shall be established in chapter three, Harnack's approach to the subject of the power of God has been rightly labelled by Berger as primarily inductive, and should be bracketed within the first variant. While containing some elements of the reductive strategy, notably in his attitude to miracles and eschatology [see ch.5 below], it will be seen that Harnack's continued allegiance to the reality of the divine referent places him in the inductive camp, as does his continual striving to discern the core-experiences which lay at the root of various facets of the

tradition as religious experiences and not experiences finally of some other sort.

Summary

How do these social-science perspectives illuminate Harnack's approach to power? We are enabled to 'place' Harnack overall within the camp of the consensus theoreticians, but Wrong's work enables us to discern the considerable common ground between Harnack and Weber in emphasising the role of conflict and resistance, and especially in the focus upon authority. Harnack's description of the power exercised by Jesus is recognisable as a type of charismatic authority, whose truth-claims are authenticated in terms of a transcendent referent. Because Harnack is convinced by this referent, he handles charismatic authority differently from a social scientist. He can attribute this kind of power to God, and it is, as we shall demonstrate, the primary type of power which Harnack does attribute to God. Yet perhaps titles like 'Lord of history' imply in Harnack's thought a more traditional, directly causal role in the events of the cosmos, a role not dependent upon the cooperation of other wills.

Wrong's raising of the 'zero-sum' question, then, helps to locate Harnack on this important continuum. Harnack essentially is a 'consensus' man, not in the sense of downplaying the role of conflict but certainly in seeing power as primarily power-to-do, prior to and independent of any necessity for power over others. Wrong's considerable interpretive value for the assessment of Harnack's view of authority and of the transformation of power in the church will become apparent in the course of this work.

Mann's explanation of the rise of ideological power dramatically conflicts with Harnack's, and shows to what extent Harnack is an idealist. But while unquestioningly contending for its independent origin and superiority to all other types of power, Harnack is not unaware of the importance of what Mann terms infrastructure for ideological power. The clearest evidence for this is his section near the beginning of Mission und Ausbreitung on the world which the first Christian missionaries addressed, which is concerned with political and social as well as religious and philosophical factors.

Mann's cohesive approach, which explains the rise of ideological power in purely human terms, points us to the issue of transcendence which divides him from Harnack. It also suggests a problem in Harnack's thought: if one posits the existence of a divine power, what is its relation to human power, and how does it operate in the human world? As we shall see, Harnack makes considerable efforts to address this question, but in the end it may be that he still remains with a fissure between sacred and secular, human and divine. Mann and Wrong both raise the question whether power is a property or a relation. They both take the latter view, where in Harnack there is, at least in his use of language, an ambivalence which needs investigating.

Berger has articulated and understood Harnack's apologetic role as a strategist attempting to affirm the Christian tradition in the face of the modern pluralistic situation by the inductive approach of tracing the

tradition back to the core-experiences which gave it birth. Unlike Harnack's early critics, Berger correctly describes Harnack's approach as inductive, though it will be argued that some reductive elements are also present. We shall also see that Berger is useful in pointing out the vulnerability of the inductive strategy—the dangers of the middle ground. We shall argue that Harnack suffered for his mediatorial efforts, and that his work was not immune from these dangers, but that his christocentrism, saves him from sliding into reductionism and helps to solve, in the case of Christianity, the inductive strategy's perennial problem of certainty.

2.c. Historical context to Harnack's concern with power

The question must be hazarded as to why the idea of power would appeal to Harnack as an organising principle for his interpretation of Christianity. Any answer must remain speculative, but it is worth examining his historical context for clues. Mention has already been made of the idea's apologetic appeal. The concept works equally well within traditional supernatural religion and within inner-subjective 'demythologised' religion, and could provide a bridge of understanding between them. According to Glick, it was Harnack's early ambition to create just such a Vermittlungstheologie ['Ich bin kein Reformator', p.354]. But its apologetic appeal, too, begs the question—if Harnack used power terms in his description of the gospel because they would be readily grasped by those who heard, what was it in their life-experience which led them to a strong concern with power and also to at least a willingness to entertain the idea of an ideological inner power which 'worked' by transforming individuals?

Given, of course, that all human situations involve power and that power accordingly cannot fail to be of some interest at all times, I would argue that the German people, and especially the intellectuals, of Harnack's time were particularly sensitised to the issues of power because of the rapid and conflictual pace of change to which they were subjected in the realms of politics, the economy and social relations, and that the idealism and romanticism which characterised the thought of the time predisposed them to identify with an apologetic of inner power.

Politically Harnack's time was extremely turbulent, and in such a climate a sharp concern with power would be no surprise. His birth was immediately preceded by the Napoleonic wars, the French revolution of 1848 and the accompanying surge of liberal democratic movements, including the abortive attempt to establish a German National Assembly. Harnack's youth coincided with the developments of a pan-German nationalism and movements towards the unification of the German Länder under the domination of Bismarck's Prussia, culminating, when Harnack was twenty, in the acclamation of Wilhelm of Prussia as the first Kaiser of Germany. Then followed the time of power, prosperity and increasing international tension under Wilhem II, coupled with the eruption of a new force in politics, the marxist social democrats. Then came the first World War, the ignominious peace and the ruinous inflation which accompanied it, the revolution and the French occupation of the Ruhr. Harnack's last years were spent in doing what he

could to stabilise the Weimar republic, and he died in the midst of economic depression, mass unemployment, and the first stirrings of nazism. In addition, Harnack lived through Germany's industrial revolution and the migrations and population explosion which accompanied it, with its cut-throat capitalism, new monied classes, and decline in the relative status and influence of the classically-trained senior bureaucrats and the mandarin intellectuals, like Harnack, who taught them.

The church too experienced many organisational upheavals during Harnack's lifetime. Political nationalism was paralleled by attempts at Protestant church union. Many reorganisations were necessitated by the shifting boundaries of the Länder, and there was also a move in many places to institute a synodical system and achieve a greater independence of the church from the state. Conflict, reaction and church parties were rife. The situation became acute after the revolution, when the Weimar government instituted a massive reorganisation of church government.

The climate of conflict and the pace of economic, social and political change is no doubt sufficient to explain the congruence of discussions about power with the living interests of the hearers. But further explanation is necessary in order to locate Harnack's particular understanding of the different types of power and their interrelations against its intellectual background.

First there is the fairly sharp distinction in Harnack's thought between political and religious power which is no doubt attributable to his Lutheran upbringing, and may account for his ability simultaneously to deplore the politicisation of the early church and stoutly defend the political aspirations of Kaiser Wilhelm's government. It also, perhaps, underlies the 'sacred/secular' split in Harnack's thought [see 2.e. below]. Mann criticises Christianity for lacking a social cosmology, but to Harnack this was a virtue. In contrast to, and perhaps in reaction against, contemporary Catholic translations of the gospel into the Centre Party, Catholic trades unions and the ultramontane power of the papacy, Harnack held that Jesus offered no social policy, but laid down principles to be worked out in relation to the needs of different times.

Then comes the influence of several ideological 'isms', of which idealism is perhaps the most important. Harnack and his university contemporaries were deeply convinced of the powerfulness and moral impact of ideological power, and with good reason, given the fact of the political power enjoyed by the university-trained bureaucracy: a powerful idea this year could become next year's government policy. They traced the dynamic element in history to the realm of mind. Geist was a very important concept, and some thinkers held it to be a transcendent cause of the evolution of civilisation [Ringer, p.99]. (Harnack re-christianised this idea with his conception of the creator spiritus.) The notion of individuality was also of great importance, and the German historical tradition, under this influence, placed an unusually strong emphasis on 'historic' individuals [ibid.]. Harnack shared the idealist notion of knowledge as not only the cognition of facts, but something with which one has a relationship and in which vital experience (Erleben) and value play a part [ibid. p.334]. On the basis of such idealism, senior academics were able to offer convincing, and sincere, legitimations of Germany's new status as a world power [ibid.,

[ibid., p.115]. They were convinced that Germany's political power was the outward reflection of its moral worth, and equally that with the ability to exercise power came the moral right to do so, though any Machtpragma was also accompanied by an ideal of justice. Also at work, and very openly in Harnack, was an idea of the missionary and educative destiny of German culture both within and outside the nation [ibid. p.268].

Ward offers an analysis of Harnack's attitudes to political and ideological power which illustrates the ambiguities and contradictions imposed by his position as a reforming mandarin idealist. He writes:

"No one more fully embodied the political and social ambiguities of the alliance of religion and learning in the Germany of that day than did Harnack. As Baumgarten, his successor as president of the Evangelisch-Sozial Kongress put it, he embodied, 'a prudent balance of social sympathy with the individualism of the aristocracy of education, religious neutrality with altruistic championship of distress, a feeling of social responsibility for everyone in the nation with protection for the hierarchically stratified world of civilisation, protestant feeling for the state with the rejection of all attempts to institutionalise the impulses of love'... [Ward, p.78].

Ward concludes that Harnack's own handling of power as a would-be social reformer exemplifies his high estimate of ideological power and demonstrates the weaknesses of that approach. Under Harnack's leadership the Evangelisch-Sozial Kongress, designed to provide a Christian response to 'the social question', took an increasingly theoretical rather than a practical direction. Ward also notes that Harnack shared Ritschl's vast overestimate of the service Christianity could render to society through the educational system. Ward insists that because of his too exclusive reliance on ideological power Harnack in the end failed to have much effect: "If Harnack was underestimated by the champions of dialectical theology in the twenties, he had succeeded neither in excogitating policy, nor in acquiring the institutional backing by which policy might be implemented" [p.82].

The influence of the current idealism was in several ways reinforced by romanticism, as represented by Schleiermacher, Goethe and Fichte, with its protest against form and structure in favour of life-energy, freedom and dynamism, and its love of the individual [C.Welch, Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century, vol. I, Yale University Press, 1972, pp.51-52].

In addition to the influence of idealism, the pietist revival of the eighteenth century played its part in helping to frame a power idiom for Harnack's descriptions of the inner life. It reached him in several ways—through its influence on Kant, Herder, Schleiermacher and Ritschl, and through the Erlangen theology in which he was raised. It emphasised new life, transformation, sanctification, and the moral imperatives of Christianity. Erlangen theology in particular was orientated toward religious experience and history as well as scripture [ibid. pp. 22f, 207], and one notes in Harnack's choice of language a mood of warm religious devotion which may have had its origins in Erlangen.

The epistemological influence of Kant upon Harnack, via Ritschl, will be discussed in greater detail below [see chapter 3, p.71f]. For our purposes now it is enough to establish that after Kant, all religious explanations turn to the role of the subject in faith and knowledge [Welch, p.47f]. Harnack's favourite philosopher, however, was Lessing, with his emphasis on history as a thing of dynamism, a teleological development in which the infinite is made manifest [ibid., p.51]. Harnack also shares common ground with Herder, who insisted on the discovery of God within living human experience and saw religion as 'the highest humanity of man' [ibid., p.54f]. One also finds similarities with Hoffman, who attempted to work from religious experience to all the necessary truths of orthodoxy, and who pioneered the nineteenth-century preoccupation with 'certainty' [ibid., p.223].

To summarise, Harnack's historical circumstances were enough to sensitise him to the subject of power, and his idealism would incline him to locate power ultimately in the realm of inwardness, in the dynamism and creativity of ideas and personality. As a theologian this sensitivity to power issues would naturally shape for Harnack questions about divine and spiritual power. The influences of Kant, of pietism and romanticism would in their different ways focus him upon the role of the subject in the religious power relation and stress the centrality of the living experience of spiritual power.

2.d. Harnack's hesitations in addressing the nature of divine power

As we established in 2.b. above, if we measure Harnack by his intentions and characteristic manner of proceeding we may locate his theological method generally, and his approach to the explanation of spiritual power specifically, within the inductive strategy. Therefore we expect him to trace dogmatic beliefs back to actual experiences of divine/spiritual power and to examine them closely. Yet we also find evident in Harnack a hesitancy about such an undertaking. He is only willing to explore the subject so far. Harnack resisted what he described as the immodest and indelicate attempt by the new theological scholarship to explore the secrets of the personality and the inner life. When describing the nature of spiritual power, of how the power of the gospel works upon the inner life of the personality, he felt he was treading on holy—and dangerous—ground. In his view Christianity must be studied on the basis of historical facts, which study may reveal the Geheimnisse (secrets) of the religion, but in the end, Christianity remains an inner experience, the Heimlichkeiten (mysteries) of which cannot finally be represented by any historical form. These remain accessible only to the feelings of the heart. This sense of mystery at the heart of the gospel and the conviction that there are barriers beyond which the investigator cannot and ought not to pass [e.g. HD III p.306] balances Harnack's apologetic desire to make Christianity clear and comprehensible. Both drives are demonstrated in his treatment of spiritual power: he goes further than most theologians in his attempt to explain the nature of spiritual power and how it operates in the individual, but the sense of reverence and mystery with which he approaches the task may explain why, as we shall

see, he often appears to stop tantalisingly short of completing it [see HD III p.306; also Glick, Reality pp.370-374].

This reverence for mystery is most pronounced with regard to Jesus. For instance, Harnack notes of Jesus that, "...how he came to the consciousness of his power and to consciousness of the obligations and mission which this power carries with it, is his secret, and no psychology will ever fathom it" [WC?, p.128]. His handling of the atonement also partakes of this reverence [see chapter 4 below].

Harnack was certainly sincere in his conviction that in dealing with this subject one reached a point where one ought to go no further, but it may be, however, that 'cannot' rather than 'ought not' is the appropriate word. And, without implying any disrespect to Harnack's conscious motivations, it is rather convenient, if one gets stuck, to be able to invoke this reverent principle of closure.

Harnack's apologetic attempts to explain divine/spiritual power and his hesitations in doing so should be set against the background of similar, and frequently more pronounced, hesitations by the majority of nineteenth and twentieth century theological thinkers. Reasons for the taboo in Harnack and the others are doubtless complex. There is certainly no doubt that in asking the questions of spiritual power one is searching the very heart of religion, and that the consequences of the questioning could be far-reaching. Reverence indeed, for believers, has been a factor in the hesitation: how dare mere humans plumb the depths of the divine, asking not only what God does but how is it done? Widespread discomfort with the subject of power in general also plays a part. Fear holds many back from investigating too closely, fear that they might become convinced that 'the power of God' is explainable purely in terms of human psychological traits such as projection and autosuggestion. 'The power of God' is then called into question, and if God has no power, then there is no God, and humanity is indeed alone in the universe. What theologian wants to face that possibility?

Something else which restrains many from asking the question is the uncomfortable intuition that the question itself stems from at least partial unbelief. (As Troeltsch observed, invisible psychological miracles are something of a last bastion for transcendence [Troeltsch, The Absoluteness of Christianity, p.60].) Only those who are unsure that God's power is at work in the world are likely to press for reassurance by enquiring as to precisely how it is at work. If the world were experienced as a place where God's sovereign creative and redemptive power was the obvious, natural backcloth to existence, such a question would probably be unnecessary or of only the mildest academic interest. The question has existential interest for us because we inhabit a world where divine power seems weak, erratic or absent, and other powers hold sway. The believer or would-be believer confronts the tradition's proclamation of the sovereign power of God with, 'I want to believe this, and I have an instinct that this is true, but in the face of all the evidence to the contrary, how can this be so?'

Harnack's work had, and perhaps still has, much to offer such a person because his own faith and thought appear to have been formed by such

questions. His own spiritual pilgrimage, as it appears in Vom inwendigen Leben, was not characterised by any frequent immediate sense of divine presence and power. He did not stand on the mountaintop instructing lesser mortals. He shared the world which seems to offer so much evidence of the divine absence. Yet he found a faith, an explanation of divine power so satisfying as to enable a lifetime of cheerfulness, immense productivity and resilience in the face of massive change and considerable suffering. He could not be classed as a Christian existentialist, for his writings, the solutions to the problems he raises, still carry about them the tone of a nineteenth-century assured optimism, but behind the confident answers one senses the questions themselves to which he dedicated his apologetic—about the apparent absence of God, the brutality of nature, about finitude and mortality—to be approaching the questions of existentialism. Non-Christians were of course already asking the questions openly, but most Christians were still hiding from them. Harnack's value lies in the fact that he made an attempt at an answer from within a comparatively orthodox Christianity.

2.e. Power terms in Harnack's usage

Harnack did not develop any particularly specialised or arcane vocabulary for discussing power, and neither did he lay out in any formal way a typology of the different kinds of power, but in the interests of clarity some attention needs to be paid both to his terminology and to the unarticulated typology of power which undergirds his thought.

Inner power: external power

When Harnack writes of 'spiritual power' or 'the power of the gospel', the words he uses are not normally Macht or Herrschaft, but Kraft or Ernst. This in itself is an indicator that the kind of power under discussion is something other than what is usually discussed in sociology or politics. Mention has already been made of a fissure in Harnack's thought about power between the divine and the human, the sacred and the secular, but this divide must be seen in the context of Harnack's larger categorisations of power. The primary dichotomy in Harnack's thought about power lies between inner and external power. Inner power refers to power originating in and operating in the first instance within the individual consciousness. This is what Harnack terms spiritual power, and the term carries the full wealth of meanings which the adjective geistlich suggests. In its broadest usage, it refers to all of the 'higher' powers which can be generated within the human consciousness, intellectual, aesthetic and ethical as well as religious. Often it appears to carry a more specifically religious meaning, as in the oft-repeated phrase, die geistliche Kraft des Evangeliums, though we should always bear in mind that Harnack did not on the whole compartmentalise human consciousness and felt there to be the closest relation between the geistig and the geistlich.

Harnack locates the operation of divine power, though not the subject of divine power, firmly within the category of inwardness. God for Harnack is still 'out there', a concrete external referent for the cosmos and the Lord of history, but as shall be demonstrated in chapter five, God's activity in the world does not break in from outside in miracles and supernatural occurrences. Rather it works from within the consciousness of inspired individuals. Thus the term geistliche Kraft also carries the sense of an inner power of divine origin or inspiration. The Holy Spirit was of much concern to Harnack, though not at a dogmatic level. The term refers to the divine power as active in the world. He identifies the Holy Spirit with the idealist Geist which is shaping history. For Harnack the dual meaning of spirit and Spirit suggests a guiding principle of his anthropology, which stresses the affinity of the human to the divine rather than its separation. Kaltenborn, while fully acknowledging that Harnack always means to speak of 'Holy Spirit', holds that in the end, in a parallel to his Jesuanismus [see ch. 4 below], he identifies the divine and the human spirit [Kaltenborn, p.64]. This is of course a problem if one ascribes to Harnack the belief that the Spirit of God is nothing but a projection from or collective symbol of the human spirit. However, that is not Harnack's perspective. Rather than bring God down, he raises humanity up in holding that the human spirit is akin to the divine and is a channel—perhaps the channel—for the divine. In his work geistliche Kraft and göttliche Kraft shade into one another, and in both cases the sphere of operations lies initially within the consciousness of the individual. Often in this thesis the duality implied in these terms will be articulated in the expression 'divine/spiritual power'.

Contrasted to inner power is external power, powers operative upon or between individuals. In this category would come the actual physical forces of nature and the more conceptual 'laws' of Harnack's observation concerning decay, entropy, and the survival of the fittest. Also in this category, though Harnack but dimly perceived, at least at a theoretical level what Weber would make so clear, is the non-personal organisational power of institutions. But the most important and most problematic of the powers Harnack delineates as external are the human social powers, the interpersonal and inter-group relations which make up the field of study of sociology and politics. They are the most important to Harnack because they are the powers which, next to inner power, most directly concern religion. They are the most problematic of the external powers because while the others in this grouping may arguably be said to originate outside of the consciousness of the individual, the relation between intrapersonal and interpersonal power in the church is more complex. But as we shall see, particularly in chapter six, he makes the distinction between these two types of power—the inner power of the gospel and the external powers of tradition, authority and dogma—fundamental to his analysis of Christian history.

Of the external social powers, Harnack, to employ Wrong's typology, while dealing competently with the social relations characterised by coercion, manipulation and inducement (like the military and secular politics of the Roman empire), is primarily concerned with the types of power by which the early church initially spread and then became an institution, namely the powers of persuasion and authority. Mission und Ausbreitung especially makes the attempt to explain why the Christian message was so persuasive,

where Dogmengeschichte focusses more on the evolution within the church of increasingly powerful forms of authority.

Power as 'power over': 'Nature'

In the 'zero-sum' debate, the question is raised as to whether conflict is intrinsic to the concept of power. Harnack would not identify power over others as being essential to a definition of divine/spiritual power, but his doctrine of the liberating power of the gospel includes as an intrinsic part the power over the dark forces of created existence itself, which he, with Ritschl, terms the power of nature. It stands in contrast to the Wordsworthian view of the natural world of the English tradition. The Judaeo-Christian teaching of the essential goodness of creation, however, is not in dispute. 'Nature', rather, is Harnack's shorthand for futility, corruption, inexorable necessity, sin, selfishness and death. He speaks of nature as something to be faced, endured and in some sense overcome by the strength of the inner spirit. He opposes to the apparent chaos, meaninglessness and mortality of existence a gospel of order, transcendent meaning and hope [see 'Christus als Erlöser' in R&A nf.2, pp.81-93; WC? p.62/DW p.41, WC? pp. 26-30]. Glick suggests that the nature/spirit dichotomy was important to Ritschl and Harnack because of "the flourishing materialism of the time" which had eroded the sense of the uniqueness and worth of humanity [Reality, p.511].

Harnack's conception of 'nature' and 'the world' is at its starkest and clearest in Marcion. Towards the end of the book he offers a demythologised interpretation of Marcion's fundamental outlook [Marcion pp.257-261], which he expressly endorses as being valid, both in Marcion's time and now, though he also appends important qualifying criticisms to it [ibid. pp. 261, 264-265]. The reason for Harnack's negativity towards 'nature' and 'the world' also appears with unusual clarity in Marcion. It is rooted in the problem of theodicy, which in this case is framed in terms of the question of how one can face the world as it really is and at the same time affirm the goodness of the God who is the creator of this world [ibid. p.261]. Harnack's answer, which he shares with Marcion, is that one can't. Marcion resolves the problem of theodicy by postulating two Gods, which Harnack has no desire to do. Harnack's route towards a solution is to make very clear the separation of God from the world, and to emphasise the Fremdheit and Neuheit of the gospel.

Two meditations written during the war years which appear in A Scholar's Testament (Vom inwendigen Leben), suffice to illustrate his position. The first opens with Harnack's definition of evil:

" 'Evil' means the habit of regarding oneself and other people simply as part of nature, or of the material world which will pass away and perish, and the habit of arranging one's life in accordance with these ideas. 'Good', on the other hand, means regarding oneself and other people as the children of God, and living our lives in accordance with this belief. Those who follow after evil use everything—even people, both those whom they love most and those for whom they have a passing attraction, only as a means to increase their earthly pleasure: exactly in the same way as all other forms of life...The

followers of the good, on the other hand, transmute all their experiences of life into spiritual nourishment; that is, in whatever circumstances they may be placed by the providence of God, they try to make themselves at home in them, knowing that these also are 'the Father's House'...A child of God, or a part of the process of Nature?—those who do not feel the pain of this contrast, and feel it constantly, can never be set free from it. But once we have felt this in the depths of our soul, it is impossible to take either a superficial or a despairing view of life again—to feel ourselves simply part of that which is doomed to perish—no, we now possess a stimulus which spurs us on, driving us ever forward and upward. And this stimulus...leads finally to this result: the soul becomes stronger, the conscience more tender, the mind purer, the whole person happier. Finally—and this is the most beautiful thing of all—gradually a kind of reconciliation is effected between the soul and Nature, and the very soul which has thus been strengthened can rejoice like a child—and indeed like a child of God—in Nature—both in the beauty of all created things and in the use of his own natural faculties—because now he knows how to control them aright and because he knows he is stronger than they are" [ST pp.6f].

The second meditation addresses more directly the question of meaninglessness:

"Some tell us that reality must be identified with nature, glorious but non-moral, nature, with its outward and inward power over us; all else is deceptive illusion; hence the one thing we have to do is simply to bow and serve: even though finally we wither away like a leaf, still we shall have lived and loved, and this is wisdom and the ultimate wisdom. Others, however, say; reality is pain and death; for, they say, these forces are always stronger than life...Each individual life is still dedicated to death, which throws its shadow ahead of us in pain and sorrow from birth onwards; to admit this is wisdom and the final wisdom. But then we hear a voice from above saying, "I am that I am; I am the Real, thy Lord and thy Redeemer; thou belongest to Me! I live and thou shalt live also: for both are Mine, Nature and Death" [ST pp.68f].

In Harnack's view it is Jesus who makes it possible for us to hear and believe this voice from above, to be liberated from the grasp of nature. Harnack writes that without Jesus, "...We would have remained plunged in weakness and darkness, unconscious like a sick butterfly in the chrysalis, if He had not shown us the power and the love of the Father, and if He had not Himself broken through from death unto life" [ibid.].

Power as 'power to': power equals energy

Harnack once described the history of human development as the progressive objectification (Objektivierung) of the spirit (Geist) and the progressive domination (Beherrschung) of matter ['Die Sicherheit und Grenzen geschichtlicher Erkenntnis' in R&A nf.4, p.3]. The latter negative, conflictual side of Harnack's understanding of spiritual power is, as we have seen, the power to overcome 'nature'. Its positive, constructive side is the power to effect this Objektivierung des Geistes. Divine/spiritual

power for Harnack is primarily creative, the power-to-do: even its conflictual overcoming of 'nature' is accomplished by creating hope, trust, certainty and joy. Kraft and Energie are often used synonymously to describe this creative power. In a meditation on John 16: 12,14 Harnack notes that John knows that he, "...possesses the Spirit of Truth as the legacy of Jesus, as a mighty, living and inexhaustible source of energy and power, from which he can draw all he needs to meet his difficulties and necessities in thought and in life" [ST p.179]. In an essay on Goethe's famous remark that the Christian religion has nothing to do with philosophy, is high above all philosophy and needs no support from it, Harnack develops the energy theme further. He says that Goethe's words mean:

"...first of all, that we ought not to measure the Christian religion by knowledge at all, but that we ought to regard it as an energy, and secondly, that—just because it is an independent entity—it possesses an independent energy of its own... As an energy philosophy cannot compare with the Christian religion, says Goethe in his old age, that is, in its influence on character and will. Character and will, however, determine life, for they are the fundamental forms of life" [ST pp.222f].

Goethe sees the revelation of the 'peculiar energy of Christianity' in the fact that:

"...through its aid, times without number, fallen and suffering humanity has been raised to a higher level... The nature and the power of the Christian religion is not fully defined when it is thus described as the support of those who need to be lifted and set on their feet; for it is far more than a support, even a living and active support, and it is not merely a message for the lost and suffering, for it remains their light and their strength when they have been lifted out of the depths into the higher places of faith..." [ibid. pp.223-224; see also Phillip Rieff's introduction to Outlines, (unnumbered) p.19].

Die Kraft des Evangeliums could perhaps be equally well translated as 'the energy of the gospel'. Divine energy captures Harnack's sense of the activity and purposiveness of God in the world and leaves aside what Harnack most clearly wanted left aside, namely an idea of God's power as that of a despot'. For, as we shall see, the character of God is the central issue in Harnack's theology—when that is rightly understood, all else flows from it. The purpose of the cross and, in Harnack's view, the method of the atonement was to change the mind of sinners about the character of God. Their radical mistrust decrees that they can only imagine a God of terror: the cross instead reveals to them a loving, forgiving Father and the power paradox of divinity in humility and suffering [see chapter 4 below]. Instead of a coercive God, exercising power upon us, Harnack's gospel reveals the empowering God, liberating and filling us with creative energy.

2.f. Selecting the appropriate questions

Having looked at Harnack's terminology for the discussion of power, we must now frame more precisely the questions about power which form the nucleus of our investigation. The question which initially led to the pursuit of this study, and which has been narrowed down in order to focus specifically on Harnack, could be phrased: 'What evidence is there in the work of Christian thinkers down the ages for the hypothesis that there is an unchanging essence of Christianity, and that it is concerned with the inner empowering of individuals?' Inherent in this question are a number of related power questions, some of which have already formed a part of our discussion. The religious interest which motivates the investigation also limits and defines the questions to be addressed. Chief among these related questions are:

1. Why have nineteenth and twentieth-century social scientists and theologians been strongly concerned with the subject of power? What is it in these centuries which makes power such a compelling subject?
2. Is the very use of the word 'power' a case of reification? Is power a thing-in-itself, a property, or is the word merely a conventional shorthand denoting social relations directed towards goal-attainment?
3. Assuming the existence of the God of Judeo-Christian understanding—i.e. one of unlimited power (the Lord God Almighty)—is this divine power similar to or different from the power we see exercised in human societies? Are they related as superior to inferior, as antitheses, as points on a continuum, as basically similar, or even indistinguishable?
4. Part of the Judeo-Christian understanding of divine power is that it effects and empowers human beings. How does one categorise the power in human beings thus derived? Is it now human, or still divine? What is spirit and what is Spirit?
5. By what process is the individual empowered by this divine power? What is the effect upon the individual's experience?
6. What is it in the human psyche which makes the exercise of power of whatever kind such a heady, joyful and even addictive experience? Why is there apparently a bias, at least in western civilisation, towards seeking power, even for its own sake, making the means of goal-attainment an end in itself?
7. If it is similar enough to human power to be termed power, how comes it that this allegedly divine and unlimited power is so little in evidence in our world? Is it a matter of point of view only? Is modern secularisation alone responsible for the fact that, as Berger puts it, we are living in a situation in which the 'gods have receded' [Berger, p.96], or is the conundrum of the affirmation of divine power in the face of frequent 'absences' of that power a more universal problem, and not only a product of our particular Weltanschauung?
8. Have the power elements of individual human psychology and human groups always been the same or have they altered with time? Are we in a

position to mean the same thing by 'the power of God' as Moses or Jesus or Luther did?

Given Harnack's interest in particular kinds of power and his historical and ideological location, only some of these questions can appropriately be put to him. Some of the questions formed part of Harnack's own agenda, while others have emerged from the 'dialogue' between my concerns and those which are inherent in the Harnackean corpus.

Some suggestions for an answer to question one have been made in 2.c. above. We may ask the question directly to Harnack to the extent of enquiring why he chose to make power a chief, if not the chief, explicatory device for describing his understanding of the essence of Christianity. One would expect no clear answer to question two from Harnack, as the social science which could challenge the notion of 'power' as a property or as an idea in the idealist sense was only just gaining momentum and Harnack was largely untouched by it.

The third question is certainly within his province. And if the clarity of his answer at a theoretical level is not all that we might hope for, the value of his historical documentation of one particular aspect of the question—namely that of the types of power operative in the church—is ample compensation. A very central question for Harnack is to what extent the church is a human community governed by and explicable in terms of ordinary historical, psychological and sociological 'laws' and to what extent it is the creation and vehicle of divine power for divine purposes.

Questions four and five are also fundamental to Harnack's power concerns and most of this investigation is taken up with establishing and evaluating his answers. With regard to Harnack we need to phrase question five as, 'Given the reality of the iron ring [see below], how does spiritual power, the empowering energy rooted in the divine, break through into individual human existence, and what is its effect upon that existence?' Question six does not appear to be directly addressed by Harnack. He simply accepts the proneness to misuse power as being part of the human condition, afflicted as it is by 'nature', and from which the church is in no way exempt. The question of why this is so comes rather later than Harnack and is predicated upon at least a partial rejection of the rather undifferentiated answer of Christian tradition, namely sin, to which Harnack would still give allegiance.

Question seven provides one of the chief motivations for Harnack's apologetic. In the Germany of his day the Christian faithful, conservative and liberal alike, were appalled by the falling away from the faith both of the masses and of the cultured in the grip of a new-found secularism and an atheistic socialism. Whether or not the problem of the perceived absence of the power of God is older than secularisation, it was a burning issue in Harnack's time. Harnack accepts many of the prime tenets of modern consciousness, including its disbelief in the incursions of transcendent power into mundane reality in the form of miracles or eschatology [see ch. 5 below]. The question, 'Given the improbability of the mythological view of Christian tradition, how can a fully modern individual also affirm the power of the Father of Jesus Christ?' is the question underlying all his apologetic work.

Question eight is not one which Harnack possessed the theoretical tools to easily address, and what is perhaps a central concern for a later generation must not expect to find an answer here. Harnack, as most thinkers of his time, assumed a fairly direct continuity of the human condition, which would allow Moses, Jesus and Luther to speak to modern individuals with a clarity nearing that with which they addressed those of their own time. Schweitzer's stirring words at the end of The Quest of the Historical Jesus (London, A.& C. Black, 1910) about the alienness of Christ may be prophetic of the opening up of this problem.

Using the letter to Stinzing and 'Die Sicherheit und Grenzen geschichtlicher Erkenntnis', already referred to, as typical, we may also frame Harnack's power questions as from his own mouth. What he proposes is this: 'Despite the contempt and indifference of many, it is my conviction that all the problems and conflicts of life eventually find their issue in the realm of religion. Given that Christianity is not one religion among many, but religion itself, and given that all phenomena of history should be analysed in terms of the powers operative in them, the direction of these powers and their effect, what is the power (Kraft) of Christianity? In what direction does it move, and what does it achieve?' Since for Harnack religion ultimately concerns "God and the soul; the soul and its God", one may expect Harnack's answers to address themselves primarily to the level of the individual. But as a church historian Harnack carries the question further, asking how did the divine/spiritual power of the gospel fare within the history of the church? Did it triumph? Was it extinguished or so badly corrupted as to be of no effect? What has been its relationship with official dogma? Has it been accessible to the ordinary believer in every age? And what is the state of things today?

Out of this dialogue emerge the questions about power which are addressed in this thesis. Briefly they are:

1. How does one affirm the divine power while acknowledging the frequent if not habitual absence of clear evidence of that power? Assuming the improbability of the mythological view of power traditionally held in Christianity, how can the fully modern individual affirm the tradition of the power of God?
2. Given the fact of the iron ring (i.e. Harnack's epistemological conviction that "Man cannot transcend his psychological endowment: an iron ring incloses him" [HD I, p.340]), how does divine power energise the human, as it so clearly has done throughout the Christian centuries?
3. If the iron ring is a fact and the mythological view of divine/spiritual power is improbable, how does one account for miracles, for supernatural events and eschatological hopes, and understand the meaning of sacraments?
4. How have divine and human power interacted in the history of the church? To what extent has the church proved itself to be a human community whose powers are governed by and explicable in terms of historical, psychological and sociological laws and to what extent is it a creation and vehicle of divine power for divine purposes?

Notes to Chapter Two (Harnack and Power)

2. a. Introduction

1. Among the important works on the subject in the past twenty years are:

- Arendt, Hannah, On Violence, Florida, Harcourt Brace, 1969 and London, Allen Lane, 1970.
- Bachrach, Peter and Baratz, Morton S., Power and Poverty: Theory and Practice, New York, Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Barnes, Barry The Nature of Power, Oxford, Polity Press, 1988.
- Clegg, Stewart R. Frameworks of Power, London, Sage Publications, 1989.
- Foucault, Michel Power/Knowledge, New York, Pantheon, 1976.
- Galbraith, J.K., The Anatomy of Power, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1984.
- Giddens, Antony Central Problems in Social Theory: action, structure and contradiction in social analysis, London, Macmillan, 1979.
- Luhmann, Niklas, Macht, Stuttgart, Ferdinand Enke, 1975.
- Lukes, Stephen, Power: A Radical View, London, Macmillan, 1974.
—ed., Power, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986.
- Mann, Michael, The Sources of Social Power: A history of power from the beginning to A.D. 1760, vol. I, Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Morriss, Peter, Power: a philosophical analysis, Manchester University, Press, 1987.
- Ng, Sik Hung, The Social Psychology of Power, London, Academic Press, 1980.
- Poulantzas, Nicos, Political Power and Social Classes, tr. ed. T. O'Hagan, London, New Left Books and Sheed & Ward, 1973.
- Wrong, Dennis, Power: its forms, bases and uses, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1979, 2nd. ed. 1988.

2. b. Perspectives from the social sciences: Wrong, Mann, Berger

1. On the relationship of Weber to Harnack and Troeltsch see Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., Max Weber and his contemporaries, London, Unwin Hyman, 1987.

2. In Peale's writings the supernatural referent is neither absent from his writings nor is it reduced to a formalistic acknowledgement. His focus certainly is on the way the power of God affects the lives of individuals and he deliberately couches his books in non-religious, non-theological language, but he never reduces 'the power of God' to being nothing but 'the power of positive thinking'. On the contrary, the reason Peale's methods of positive thinking (which have clear antecedents in classical Christian spirituality) are effective is because they are methods of thinking about and immersing oneself in the power of God. The focus on religious experience and the retention of the supernatural/true-transcendent referent in Peale make it more reasonable to bracket him among practitioners of the third, inductive strategy.

3. Berger repeatedly reminds us that religious experience is self-authenticating at the time, but the authentication fades over time and when the experience is known only at second hand. This variant of the inductive strategy posits the repeated availability of that kind of authentication, and not just for a few spiritual virtuosi, but potentially for all Christians. Because there is less emphasis on argument and interpretation in such writers and more on biography, and because of the aberrations to which the quest for direct experience has frequently given rise, such an approach is often not accepted as a serious theological option: yet the existence and widespread influence in the churches of this approach to spiritual power should render it worthy of serious study.

2.e. Power terms in Harnack's usage

1. There are some similarities of emphasis between Harnack's view and the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of the 'uncreated energies' of God. This resolves the paradox of the inaccessibility and accessibility of God by stating that while God's essence or nature is unknowable and incommunicable, God is knowable and communicating through the energies (δυνάμεις), divine powers and operations which proceed forth from the divine essence. Other metaphors for it are 'uncreated light', 'glory', and 'grace'. It is the way in which God communicates with, indwells and deifies us, a natural procession from the essence of the Trinity, larger than the western conception of grace which focusses upon causality and will. God's will created all things by the energies in order that created being may accede freely to union with God in the same energies [Vladimir Lossky, The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church, London, James Clarke & Co., 1957, pp.67-89].

CHAPTER THREE: THE POWER OF GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

3.a. Affirming the power of God in the modern situation

1. Evidence of Harnack's inductive approach

It has been suggested above [ch. 2.b] that Harnack's strategy for the affirmation of the Christian tradition in the face of modern religious pluralism was an inductive one, one of tracing the elements of the tradition back to the core experiences which gave rise to them [see e.g. Marcion, p.136; 'Die Neuheit des Evangeliums nach Marcion', R&A Werk. p.134]. An examination of particular instances of this will help to substantiate the claim.

Harnack's discussion of Jesus as the Messiah aptly demonstrates this approach. He begins by establishing that the concept in question is indeed an historical one, arguing that, contrary to the view of Wellhausen and others, Jesus did indeed consider himself to be the Messiah [WC? p.130]. He then notes that the concept is strange to us, but not entirely impossible to understand [WC? p.140]. Then he describes what the concept 'messiah' had meant in Jewish religious history, how it had developed, and what it signified in the time of Jesus, i.e., to the early, simpler hopes of a glorious future for Israel through a great king empowered by God had been added ideas of Messiah as a supernatural figure, judging Israel as well as the nations, the perfectly just man who fulfils all the commandments. In Jesus' time, "...there was a surging chaos of disparate feeling, as well as of contradictory theory..." [WC? p.135]. The concept of Messiah was flexible, and where moral and religious elements were strong, the image of a warlike ruler was replaced by that of a prophet.

Harnack goes on to explain what the concept achieved, and why it was 'necessary'—the fact that it gained for Jesus absolute recognition within Jewish religious history, which, as the future was to show, is the true religious history of all mankind. He then states that once it had achieved this end, its work was done; that Jesus left the concept far behind, putting a meaning on it which was too much for it to bear [WC? p.141/DW p.88].

Harnack then describes what in the concept is useful and meaningful in our own day. We see in the concept of Messiah the hope for a golden age, which, when moralised, is the goal of every vigorous movement in human life. The idea of a personal Messiah shows that it is persons who form the saving element in history, and the idea of Messiah as a kingly ruler shows that, "...if a union of mankind is ever to come about by their deepest forces and highest aims being brought into accord, this same mankind must agree to acknowledge one lord and master" [WC? p.142/DW p.90].

Finally, having declared what, in his opinion, the concept 'messiah' can signify for us, Harnack shuts the door on any more literal or supernatural interpretation, saying that over and above what he has described no other meaning or value can any longer be attached to it ["Aber darüber hinaus vermögen wir der messianischen Idee einen Sinn und eine Geltung nicht mehr zu geben; Jesus Selbst hat ihr genommen", WC? p.142/DW p.90].

This pattern of reinterpretation—uncovering the historical roots of a concept and the core emotion and experience which it embodies, describing the ideas's contextual meaning and its development, determining what it achieved or why it was necessary, discussing what it can still mean for us today—is one that Harnack uses, with some variation and abridgement, for many concepts. Other examples are:

a. He understands Jesus' claim to be the Son of God as having to do with knowledge of God. Jesus was convinced that he knew God in a way no one ever knew him before, and that his vocation was to communicate this knowledge [WC? p.124-129].

b. He explains the phenomenon of demon possession as a form of mental illness, rare but not extinct today, which is best dealt with by the influence of a strong personality [WC? p.58; see also ch.5.].

c. In describing the eschatological pronouncements of John the Baptist, Harnack explains them inductively. History shows, he says, that whenever a man earnestly and out of his own experience points others to God, it always takes the form of announcing that the end is at hand. This happens for two reasons: because the prophet knows that without religion the search for meaning is bound to go hopelessly astray and he sees with dismay the irrevocable end for the indifferent many; and because the prophet is so horrified by evil that he is astonished that God's wrath has not yet fallen, and so feels the time to be very near [WC? p.41/DW p.26].

d. As shall be demonstrated in chapter four, Harnack's sections in What is Christianity? on the death of Christ for sin and on the resurrection offer further examples of his practice of reinterpreting traditional concepts according to the underlying experience [WC? p.155/DW p.98].

One of the strongest pieces of evidence for the fact that Harnack's gospel was in the end conceived not in propositions but in terms of experiences can be derived from the fact that the verbal definitions of the essence of Christianity which appear in his many works are extremely varied. Glick complains that Harnack offers too many, that the definitions vary too much, and that none of them is really adequate to express what Harnack seems to mean by 'the gospel' [Reality, pp.144-147]. Bearing in mind, however, that Harnack was an articulate scholar capable of exact expression, and that the subject of the gospel was of the keenest importance to him, we must seek an explanation for this variety and alleged inadequacy in something other than wooliness or carelessness. The conclusion which suggests itself is that to attempt to answer the question, 'what does Harnack mean by the gospel?' by adopting or 'boiling down' any of his many definitions is to miss the point. For Harnack, the gospel resided in no creed but in an inner experience, the experience of being a child of God. The 'articles' of the gospel message such as the Fatherhood of God, the forgiveness of sins,

and the eternal worth of the human soul are 'gospel' precisely because they have the power to induce this experience, to overcome the forces of 'the world' and bring trapped and burdened humanity into the glorious liberty of the children of God .

The language of 'experience' (Erfahrung, Erlebnis, Lebenserfahrung) contains perhaps almost as many pitfalls as the language of power. The most serious one is the danger of imprecision, but, like power-language, experience-language can still be of service provided its sense is carefully determined. Instead of 'the experience of divine/spiritual power', one could speak of existential encounter or receptivity, or of the individual being capacitated by the divine. One needs to overcome the rather static quality of the word 'experience' in English. What is meant by an 'experience of divine/spiritual power' is not a mere sense of the numinous or a warm bath of sentiment, but an empowering and a transformation: one does not encounter the divine and remain unchanged.

ii. The iron ring: limitations on the sources for evidence of divine power

The first of the four questions proposed in chapter two is that of how to affirm the divine power while acknowledging the widespread absence of clear evidence of that power. The question is put within the assumption which Harnack, in line with modern consciousness, makes that the traditional Christian mythological view of power is unlikely to be true, and that it is at the least, for us, inadmissible. Harnack makes this assumption on the basis of his epistemology, encapsulated in the metaphor of the iron ring. This conviction about the limitations of the human ability to know governs Harnack's treatment of all religious phenomena. His theology indeed may be read as an attempt to work out the significance of the gospel from strictly within the iron ring.

Following Ritschl, who reintroduced Kant as the paramount philosopher for protestants', Harnack stands with Luther and Kant in accepting rather than challenging the limitedness of the human capacity for knowledge of the divine (see Ward, p.341. Luther would know God only as revealed in Christ: Kant secularised this and made it an epistemological principle governing human access to the knowledge of ultimate reality, inculcating a radical scepticism about our ability to know things-in-themselves. Harnack embraced this conviction, and conducted his theology accordingly. This conviction undergirds his abhorrence of metaphysical speculation as a dangerous delusion and distraction. Any theology rooted in the notion of 'being' earns his scorn: he writes with distaste of "...that hollow figment, το ὄν," [HD III p.137], and the two-nature christology based upon it which led generations astray from the real Jesus. This conviction also lies behind his writing-off of all mysticism as baseless [HD I p.140], and is the reason why Harnack's theology proceeds von unten: for human history is the only possible source for a knowledge, and a mediated knowledge at that, of the divine.

How strictly does Harnack intend his proposition that 'man cannot transcend his psychological endowment' to be taken? Clearly the religious core-experiences to which he seeks to trace religious dogmas occur within the iron ring of human psychology: but unless divine reality is to be

identified as a world-soul, in order to be religious experiences they must have a referent outside it. If they do not, then Harnack's inductive approach to the tradition becomes in fact reduction. How does Harnack hold together his commitment to remain within the iron ring and his need for a transcendent referent? His approach is to infer the reality of the divine referent, which he cannot prove, on the basis of the many pointers to it which he finds in history and human experience.

Rumscheidt objects to Harnack's commitment to the principle of the iron ring, repeating Barth's accusation that Harnack turns 'thus saith the Lord' into 'thus hears man' [Rumscheidt, p.189]. The concern, no doubt, is that such an attitude means that Harnack cannot treat the divine partner in the communication with due seriousness, but this is in no way a necessary implication from Harnack's recognition of the ineluctable fact that the voice of God reaches us only through human ears [see *ibid.* p.71]. The image Rumscheidt uses to describe Harnack's view, that of the positivist's confident assumption of final knowledge, is further contradicted by his reverence for divine mystery [see 2.d. above]. Harnack's commitment to the iron ring led him to refrain on the whole from talking in Ist-sätze. He maintained a dogged loyalty to his view of epistemological truth, and, in spite of his personal piety, accepted the 'agnosticism' which it implied [*ibid.*]. What we can and do possess, Harnack maintains, are references and pointers to God's reality throughout the course of history which is, after all, under the control of the Spirit of God, and we have supremely the revelation of God in Jesus: but this is of God pro nobis, not God in sich².

The iron ring has the most profound consequences for Harnack's treatment of Jesus. It led him to abandon the ideas of pre-existence and the classical formulations of the Trinity and of the Logos:

"The life of Jesus contains tensions for which we do not possess historical analogies. A scientific person can and should not use any other formulation. It was a solely human life, and yet the faith learned from him divine power and divine wisdom. That is the only possible formulation. One falls helplessly into Docetism or into the two-nature doctrine if one formulates the question in any other way. If Jesus had the consciousness as no other (and no other after him was able to or could have it), that he was the Son of God, then he had this within a completely human consciousness" [AZH p.247; Glick's translation: Reality, p.184].

The consequences of acceptance of the limitations of the iron ring for a study of divine/spiritual power are that the existence of that power cannot be deduced from speculative principles or the unsupported authority of tradition, but must be inferred from the evidence of human religious experience in history.

iii. The evidence for divine power is there, in history and in personality

Despite his awareness of living in a time in which 'the gods have receded', Harnack was confident that history and present experience furnished ample evidence for the inference of divine power.

In order adequately to grasp the significance of Harnack's statements about divine/spritual power in history, one needs to be aware of how deeply rooted in his historical thinking was the idea of conflicting and interacting powers. Evidence is to be found in 'Über die „Vorzeichen" der in der Geschichte wirksamen Kräfte', written in 1905 [R&A nf.1, pp.165-167]. Vorzeichen is used in the mathematical sense, indicating 'plus' or 'minus' value. Harnack's point is that the active forces of history—his examples include socialism and individualism, cosmopolitanism and naturalism, free trade and protectionism, population explosion and 'malthusianism', humanism and realism—are themselves characterless: they acquire positive or negative value from the momentary situation of the historical whole on and in which they work. All these things he describes as Kräfte whose value-signs are determined by the whole system of shifting, moving forces, and argues that anyone who wants to affect the future must first of all be aware of all the elements of the current relationships of change (Wechselverhältnisse). Thus we see that Harnack expresses the dynamism of history in terms of varieties of power, stressing their complex and constantly shifting patterns of interaction and their moral neutrality. The one exception he makes is for the clearly spiritual powers of goodwill and humanity, which always carry a positive value [ibid.].

As one would expect, spiritual power themes come to the fore in Harnack's treatment of Christian history. In the summary sketch with which he concludes History of Dogma the theme of the gospel as divine/spritual power evident and operating in history is unmistakable. The entire summary has been reproduced, in order to not to distort the frequency with which power themes appear, and I have underlined words connected with divine/spritual power:

"The Gospel entered into the world, not as a doctrine, but as a joyful message and as a power of the Spirit of God, originally in the forms of Judaism. It stripped off these forms with amazing rapidity, and united and amalgamated itself with Greek science, the Roman Empire and ancient culture, developing, as a counterpoise to this, renunciation of the world and the striving after supernatural life, after deification. All this was summed up in the old dogma and in dogmatic Christianity. Augustine reduced the value of this dogmatic structure, made it subservient to a purer and more living conception of religion, but yet finally left it standing so far as its foundations and aim were concerned. Under his direction there began in the Middle Ages, from the 11th century, an astonishing course of labour; the retrograde steps are to a large extent only apparent, or are at least counter-balanced by great steps of progress. But no satisfying goal is reached; side by side with dogma, and partly in opposition to it, exists a practical piety and religious self-criticism, which points at the same time forwards and backwards—to the Gospel, but ever the more threatens to vanish amid unrest and languor. An appallingly powerful ecclesiasticism is taking shape, which has already long held in its possession the stolid and indifferent, and takes control of the means whereby the restless may be soothed and the weary gathered in. Dogma assumes a rigid aspect; it is elastic only in the hand of political priests; and it is seen to have degenerated into sophistry; faith takes its flight from it, and leaves the old structure to the guardians of the Church. Then

appeared Luther, to restore the 'doctrine', on which no one any longer had an inward reliance. But the doctrine which he restored was the Gospel as a glad message and as a power of God.

That this was what it was, he also pronounced to be the chief, nay the only, principle of theology. What the Gospel is must be ascertained from Holy Scripture; the power of God cannot be construed by thought, it must be experienced; the faith in God as the Father of Jesus Christ, which answers to this power, cannot be enticed forth by reason or authority; it must become a part of one's life; all that is not born of faith is alien to the Christian religion and therefore also to Christian theology—all philosophy, as well as all asceticism. Matthew XI:27 is the basis of faith and of theology. In giving effect to these thoughts, Luther, the most conservative of men, shattered the ancient church and set a goal to the history of dogma.

That history has found its goal in a return to the Gospel. He did not in this way hand over something complete and finished to Christendom, but set before it a problem, to be developed out of many encumbering surroundings, to be continuously dealt with in connection with the entire life of the spirit and with the social condition of mankind, but to be solved only in faith itself. Christendom must constantly go on to learn, that even in religion the simplest thing is the most difficult, and that everything that is a burden upon religion quenches its seriousness ('a Christian man's business is not to talk grandly about dogmas, but to be always doing arduous and great things in fellowship with God'—Zwingli). Therefore the goal of all Christian work, even of all theological work, can only be this—to discern even more distinctly the simplicity and the seriousness of the Gospel, in order to become ever purer and stronger in spirit, and ever more loving and brotherly in action' (HD VII pp.272f).

Divine power, then, has manifested itself in history supremely in the gospel, which Harnack describes as a joyful message and a power of the Spirit, thus expressing his view of divine/spiritual power as both intellectual and personal. But in dogmatic Christianity and in the early Middle Ages, despite the positive influences of Augustine, of world-renunciation and the striving after supernatural life and later of practical piety and religious self-criticism, the divine/spiritual power inherent in the gospel was more and more controlled by 'an appallingly powerful ecclesiasticism'. Dogma, itself once a force for good though never in Harnack's view an unmixed blessing, became rigid and degenerate, and faith moved elsewhere. Luther's restored 'doctrine' was the gospel as glad message and a power of God. Harnack has these last words in italics. Under Luther, doctrine was gospel and gospel was divine power, a power not to be thought about but to be experienced, a faith not drawn forth by reason or authority but made part of one's life.

In this view the history of dogma has reached its goal in a return to the gospel. This return in Luther had powerful consequences: it shattered the ancient church, and set future generations a continuing task. This task is the goal of all Christian and all theological work and it is couched in power language: first to discern the simplicity and seriousness (Ernst) of

the gospel, in order then to be purer and stronger in spirit and more loving and brotherly in action. The gospel is simple and serious, its task is to give us purity and spiritual strength in order to do—to act in love. The quotation from Zwingli sums it up in insisting that the business of the gospel, and therefore our business, is not primarily intellectual: it is to do arduous and great things in partnership with God.

The History of Dogma charts in great detail the struggles of this gospel, the struggles of divine/spiritual power, against opposition of all kinds, through the centuries of Christian history. It thus forms the most important piece of evidence for the assertion that in Harnack's view the reality of divine/spiritual power can be reliably inferred from history. Without denying the possibility that his portraits of the major figures may be coloured—and whose are not?—the fact that Harnack can with a fair degree of legitimacy find his major themes concerning this kind of power present in the work of paramount Christian thinkers of post-apostolic history such as Athanasius, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas and Luther lends them a credence and rootedness which a summary like Das Wesen or a monograph on divine power never could.

iv. Jesus the supreme evidence of divine/spritual power at work in the world

A description of the gospel which occurs early in History of Dogma demonstrates clearly the grounds of Harnack's conviction that the experience of divine/spiritual power, with transforming personal consequences, is available within the iron ring. Harnack writes that the gospel presents itself as an apocalyptic message on the soil of the Old Testament and as the fulfilment of the law and the prophets, and yet is a new thing—the creation of a universal religion on the basis of the Old Testament religion. Usually, Harnack declares, when the traditional religion is narrow, the new religion appears very abstract, and religion withdraws from social life, becoming a private affair. But here:

"...an overpowering personality has appeared—the Son of God. Word and deed coincide in that personality, and as it leads men into a new communion with God, it unites them at the same time inseparably with itself, enables them to act on the world as light and leaven, and joins them together in a spiritual unity and an active confederacy"
[HD I p.41].

It is in Jesus that Harnack finds the ultimate evidence for the reality and accessibility of divine/spiritual power. He is presented as the powerful personality par excellence who can take hold of and transform the inner life of others. He taught 'as one having authority', and that authoritative personality is not only a past historical example: „Hinter jeder Spruche steht er selbst" [WC? p.51/DW p.33]. Veiled behind the saying is the living Christ, and in encountering his message today we meet not his memory but himself. For Harnack, the essence of Christianity is the experience of divine/spiritual empowering through contact with Jesus Christ. The many definitions of the gospel serve their purpose primarily in evoking the feeling of this experience and the sense of this power (see 3.b.iii and ch.4 below).

v. The opposition to divine/spiritual power

Divine/spiritual power is affirmed, despite appearances, to be at work in our world. It is also affirmed by Harnack to be engaged in active conflict with other kinds of power. Redemption forms the primary category for Harnack's understanding of the activity of divine/spiritual power in the world [e.g. HD I p.65, HD II pp.203f, 225, 236f, 287], and redemption implies conflict—it is always redemption from. Harnack's understanding of 'the opposition' furnishes by its contrast a clearer picture of divine/spiritual power. A primary category of opposition is that of 'nature', used in the specialised sense described earlier [see 2.e. above]. In addition to 'nature', that is, the meaninglessness and futility of natural existence, Harnack lists as opposing forces to the power inherent in the gospel that of 'the world', including mammon, worry and selfishness [WC? pp.84-87], sin, weakness and disease [WC? pp.59-60]. In History of Dogma the opposition of 'nature' features in the passage on the resurrection, which became the mightiest power through which the gospel won humanity because it convinced believers that God would release them from death [HD I p.84]. With regard to 'the world', where Das Wesen concentrates more upon personal experience, Dogmengeschichte applies itself to the experience of the church, in which the inner, divine/spiritual power of the gospel was opposed by the external social powers of authority and organisation, along with the ideological power of secular philosophy and scientific learning, and the entropy of waning moral standards [see ch.6 below]. In most of his discussion of the opposition to spiritual power, Harnack stresses that power's ability successfully to overcome opposition, but the story of the church's transpotentiation is to a considerable extent the story of its defeat, though Harnack insists that that defeat was neither complete nor final.

The passages in Das Wesen and those scattered throughout the Dogmengeschichte on sin and the experience of forgiveness adopt a personal, existential and psychological perspective, and are of considerable depth and lyricism. But Harnack also stresses that the early church did not always put sin and universal sinfulness in the foreground of its preaching. He holds that Jesus sought the different points in individuals upon which he could lay hold in order to lead them to the kingdom of God. The more common early themes were the antitheses of night, error, dominion of demons, and death versus light, truth, deliverance and life. The consciousness of universal sinfulness was first made the fundamental negative frame of mind of Christendom by Augustine [HD I pp.60-61].

Harnack, like Ritschl, in using the word Schuld, appears not to make a distinction between sin and the guilt which sin engenders. In Harnack's view, our fundamental guilt before God is not any particular sin, but the lack of trust, of child-like fear and love. The root of sin is turning from God in distrust, in placing not God but self at the centre of one's life. All 'sins' grow out of this disposition of the heart: "What do you love? What is the most precious thing in life to you? That is the decisive factor" [ST p.63]. Perhaps where Harnack differs from others who psychologise the concepts of sin and guilt is that he does not wish thereby to minimise their significance. He emphasises that this guilt is

not a personal, interior-moral matter only, for it destroys God's world, and therefore, one way or another, it must be wiped out, whether in wrath or love, in judgment or forgiveness [HD VI pp.70, 79, 80 n.1; see also ch.4 below].

By and large, Harnack has little to say directly on the subject of evil. The idea of a supernatural source of evil is but little discussed, though he does mention that one of the early understandings of redemption was in terms of deliverance from bondage to the demonic [HD II pp.220f, HD VI p.56], and he notes that Jesus accomplished mighty deeds in opposition to the devil and his kingdom [HD I p.65-66], but without comment which would reveal his own attitude. This may be because the passage is intended to be historical narrative rather than evaluation, but it may also be that, once again, the iron ring is in evidence, for such matters are outside the possibility of our knowing. Just as he remains neutral about the Fall—how it was that sin became dominant and endemic in humanity he says we do not know [WC? p.151; see HD V pp.204, 205 n.2, 211 n.5, 220]—he wishes to remain silent on the subject of the causation or promotion of evil outside of human possibilities. As is his conviction with sacred truths, so with the 'mystery of evil': some things are none of our business. There is, in Harnack's view, quite enough to concern us within the iron ring, and, in any event, his deep assurance of God's victory and supremacy over all opposition diminishes the urgency of the question.

We can see, then, that Harnack locates much of the opposition to divine/spiritual power in internal events and dispositions. 'Nature' and 'the world' are certainly external phenomena, but what is really destructive about 'nature' is the sense of meaninglessness and futility to which it gives rise, and what is destructive about 'the world' is worldliness. Without explicitly dismissing it, he plays down the concept of an evil external to humanity, and offers a relational, psychological understanding of sin. And to the irreducibly external sources of opposition, the disease, suffering and death inherent in 'nature' and the social powers of authority and organisation, Harnack proposes, without wishing to render illegitimate efforts to amend these external situations, an internal solution, the solution of divine/spiritual power, through which the blind and brutal course of these external oppositions can be so encountered that all things must necessarily work for good.

vi. The inwardness of divine/spiritual power

This power is primarily an internal event, though it has profound consequences also for the external world. In a speech to the academic World Congress in St. Louis, Missouri in 1904 Harnack described the personal experience of divine/spiritual empowering, the new birth, as:

"...that inner, moral, new creation which transmutes all values, and of the slaves of compulsion makes the children of freedom. Not even in the history of the Church can anyone get a direct vision of this inner evolution accomplished in the individual, nor by any external facts whatever can anyone be convinced of its possibility and reality. But the light which shines from it throws its rays on what happens on the stage, and lets the spectator feel in his heart that the

forces of history are not exhausted in the natural forces of the world, or in the powers of head and hand" ['The Relationship between Ecclesiastical and General History', Contemporary Review 86, 1904, p.859].

The most important kinds of power are not external, natural or socio-political, but inner powers of which divine/spiritual power is the chief. The kingdom of God is an inner kingdom of healing and forgiveness, 'eine stille, machtige Gotteskraft in den Herzen' [DW p.39/WC? p.61]. The effect of the gospel within the individual is to combat the forces of 'nature' and 'the world'. The gospel, to Harnack, is the finding by individuals of the living God as their God and as the source of strength, joy and peace, in order, negatively, to overcome these opposing forces, and, positively, to fulfill Christ's commands. This fulfilling of his commands is made possible by increased moral power, which in Harnack is distinguishable from but intimately connected to divine/spiritual power as its product and test [WC? p.75/DW p.48, WC? p.8/DW p.5].

We are reminded, in delineating Harnack's concept of divine/spiritual power or energy, of the sociological insistence that power is not a property but a relation. In making divine/spiritual power an inner power, and in separating it so clearly from external powers, it becomes clear that Harnack has not abandoned the reified idea of power as a property inherent in, and conceptually distinct from, the persons or groups who exercise it. This is an expression of his idealism, which he was motivated to assert vigorously in the face of the vigorous materialism and ontological reductionism by which he was surrounded. As part of his dualism, it could be said to constitute a prime tenet of the metaphysic which Harnack, however unwittingly, imposed upon his work.

Reification is a constant problem for anyone wishing to discuss power. The matter is complicated, as Wrong points out, by the fact that at least in English there is no transitive verbal form of the word. Therefore to talk of power at all, one must use it as a noun, and to use a substantive word suggests that there is in fact a 'substance'. In Harnack's time a reified use of the word power was commonplace, especially in theological works. It is unarguable that Harnack's power language is reified, but when we look closely at his explanations of how inner power functions, it appears that he was in the process of working his way out of reification. The explanations emphasise not 'the power' itself, but the dynamic quality of what 'it' accomplishes. The very fact that Harnack took such pains to explain what inner power was and what it accomplishes, that is, to unpack the substantive language and emphasise this power's dynamic and relational qualities, is proof of the steps he had begun to take away from a reified conception of power. Harnack's description of power is the description of processes, the processes of transformation and reordering within the individual consciousness and between individuals and groups. His language still chains him to a reified, idealist view, but the content has begun to move forward.

The inwardness of the divine/spiritual power appears most clearly, in Harnack's view, in Jesus' conduct of his ministry:

"...He sought to found no sect or school. He laid down no rules for outward adhesion to himself. His aim was to bring men to God and to prepare them for God's Kingdom. He chose disciples, indeed, giving them special instructions and a share in his work; but even here there were no regulations...Wherever he went, he wakened or found children of God...No rule or regulation bound them together. They simply sought and shared the supreme boon which came home to each and all, viz., the Kingdom of their Father and of the individual soul..." [M&E I p.37].

In Mission and Expansion Harnack goes on to describe how in the early missionary preaching the words of Jesus and the historical picture of him furnished by the gospels continued to make available this inner power:

"...Rightly and wisely, people no longer noticed the local and temporal traits either in this historical sketch or in these sayings. They found there a vital love of God and men, which may be described as implicit universalism; a discounting of everything external (position, personality, sex, outward worship, etc.) which made irresistibly for inwardness of character;...Jesus...shattered Judaism, and brought out the kernel of the religion of Israel. Thereby—i.e., by his preaching of God as the Father, and by his own death—he founded the universal religion, which at the same time was the religion of the Son" [M&E I pp.42f].

In Harnack's view, a new power of the inner life was something for which the ancient hellenic world was crying out. The history of religion had, at this time, reached the stage in no one could be a god any more without also being a Saviour (Heiland) [Marcion, p.17]. Harnack writes:

"The cheerful, naive spirit of the old religion, so far as it still survived, lay a-dying, and its place was occupied by fresh religious needs...The refinements of material civilization and mental culture made people more sensitive to the element of pain in life, and this increase of sensitivity showed itself also in the sphere of morals...There was a real demand for purity, consolation, expiation and healing, and as these could not be found elsewhere, they began to be sought in religion" [M&E I p.105].

Thus the Christian preaching met a new and deeply-felt need which was, in Mann's terms, interstitial to existing ideological structures. The divine/spiritual power released through the new faith engendered many marvels—prophecies, dreams, raptures, tongues, healings, exorcisms—and, Harnack notes; "...it is no less effective in heightening the religious and the moral powers, which operate with such purity and power in certain individuals that they bear palpably the stamp of their divine origin" [M&E I pp.201f]. Heroic faith is demonstrated, and charitable services are rendered which are far more moving and stirring than any miracle. Harnack maintains that "...if the early Christians always looked out for the proofs of the Spirit and of power, they did so from the standpoint of their moral and religious energy, since it was for the sake of the latter object that these [charismatic] gifts had been bestowed upon the earth" [ibid. p.205]. He makes the point that the early popular Christian literature differed from that of other contemporary cults:

"...moreover, and this is of supreme importance, the fact that their Christian range included the exploits of moral heroism, stamped them in this field with a character which was all their own and lent them a very telling power. What existed elsewhere merely in certain stereotyped and fragmentary forms appeared within Christianity in a wealth of expression where every function of the spiritual, the mental, and the moral life seemed actually to be raised above itself" (ibid.)³.

The radical difference of this inner power from worldly forms of authority and coercion is made clear in Harnack's theme of 'strength made perfect in weakness' [e.g. WC? p.138/DW p.88]. This theme proves to be of great importance for Harnack's understanding of the atonement [see ch.4 below].

The gospel in Harnack's terms is characterised by a quiet peaceful element, a disposition ardently and humbly devoted to God and to the brethren. The gospel's one aim, is that man may find God and have him as his own God, in order to gain in him humility, patience, peace, joy and love. His description of 'the gospel in the gospel' makes this clear:

"...The preaching of Jesus contains three great main sections. Firstly the message of the approaching kingdom of God or of the future salvation; secondly, the proclamation of the actual state of things and of thoughts, such as are given in Matthew VI:25-34; VII:7-11; IX:2, X:28-33 etc. Thirdly, the new righteousness (the new law). The middle section connected with Matthew XI:25-30, and therefore also combined with the primitive Christian testimony regarding Jesus as Lord and Saviour, I hold, from strictly historical and objective grounds, to be the true main section, the gospel in the gospel, and to it I subordinate the other portions. That Christ himself expressed it under cover of Eschatology I know as well as the antiquarians who have so keen an eye for the everlasting yesterday..."⁴
[HD V p.xi: see also HD I pp.58, 74f].

Harnack praises Augustine for seeing that the gospel is ultimately different from everything called doctrine, i.e. a vital spiritual experience. The law is doctrine: the gospel is power [HD V pp.138-139]. It is not, however, concerned with powerful feelings and dispositions only: "That only has any value which heightens the power to be and to do good; everything else is a poisonous fog" [HD V p.76].

This inner power can be identified, in Mann's terms, with ideological power, so long as this is not taken to mean that it affects the mind only and has no impact on behaviour or the external world, and so long as one bears in mind that for Harnack this ideological power is predicated on a true transcendence rather than a social transcendence. What we will look at below is how, in Harnack's understanding, this power becomes operative within individuals.

3.b. How divine energy energises the human

1. Introduction

Having, in response to the first question, examined Harnack's conviction that despite evidence to the contrary, divine/spiritual power is active and accessible within the iron ring, we must now begin to address the second question and discover the means by which, within the iron ring, this power empowers receptive individuals. In order to do this it is profitable to begin with the examination of a number of his descriptions of 'the gospel'. I have underlined words and phrases which point to how the gospel empowers humanity:

a. Early in History of Dogma he describes the gospel as the glad message of the government of the world and every individual soul by God the Father and Judge. This dominion of God frees us from the power of the devil, makes us rulers in the heavenly kingdom (as opposed to the kingdoms of the world), which will be sensibly realised in a near-approaching future aeon. It secures life for all who yield themselves to God, though they should lose the world and earthly life itself. This dominion of God imposes the old/new law of undivided love for God and neighbour: the way to it is through a change of mind, self-denial, humility and trust in God. There is in this a continued recognition of one's own unworthiness, but God calls into the kingdom just these sinners, by promising the forgiveness of sins which hitherto have separated them from God. And this gospel is inseparably connected with Jesus Christ; in him it is word and deed and becomes his personal life into which he draws all others [HD I pp.58-59].

b. He notes in the first lecture of What is Christianity? that the Christian religion, "...is something simple and sublime...one thing only...eternal life in the midst of time, by the strength and under the eyes of God" [WC? p.8/DW p.5].

c. Later he writes: "...It is a glad message assuring us of life eternal, and telling us what the things and the forces with which we have to do are worth. By treating of life eternal it teaches us how to lead our lives aright. It tells us of the value of the human soul, of humility, of mercy, of purity, of the cross, and the worthlessness of worldly goods and anxiety for the things of which earthly life consists. And it gives the assurance that in spite of every struggle, peace, certainty, and a quality within that can never be destroyed [eine innere Unzerstörbarkeit] will be the crown of a life rightly led" [WC? pp.146-147/DW p.92].

d. In discussing Paul, Harnack notes that he transferred the gospel out of Judaism into the realm of universal religion without hurting the inner and essential features of the gospel, that is, "...unconditional trust in God as the Father of Jesus Christ, confidence in the Lord, forgiveness of sins, certainty of eternal life, purity and brotherly fellowship..." [WC? p.180].

e. He adds that, "...as a Gospel, it has only one aim--the finding of the living God, the finding of Him by every individual as his God, and as the source of strength and joy and peace..." [WC? p.190/DW p.120].

f. In responding to the question whether the gospel 'survived' the transformation of the primitive community into early catholicism, Harnack's affirmative answer shows what he considered to demonstrate the active presence of the gospel: "...The way to God is found with certainty, and the simplicity of the life within does not appear to be disturbed or encumbered...". Harnack takes Clement of Alexandria as an example. A Greek to his fingertips, Clement still; "...won peace and joy from the Gospel, and he can also express what he won and testify of the power of the living God" [WC? pp.215-216].

g. Even amid what Harnack sees as the religious perversion of Greek Orthodoxy, the gospel has survived, for here too; "...are men who have come to know God as the Father of mercy and the leader of their lives and who love Jesus Christ, not because they know him as the person with two natures, but because a ray of his being has shone from the Gospel into their hearts, and its ray has become light and warmth to their own lives". Here too, the fatherly providence of God endues men with strength and energy, unselfishness and love [WC? p.243].

h. Of Roman Catholicism, Harnack says that, "...Ecclesiasticism has not availed to suppress the power of the Gospel...", the proof of this being that "...In all ages it has produced saints, so far as men can be so called, and it still produces them today" [WC? p.266].

i. Harnack says that in Protestantism's four leading points, inwardness and spirituality, the fundamental thought of the God of grace, God's worship in spirit and in truth, and the idea of the church as a community of faith, the gospel was re-won [WC? p.284].

The empowering begins with a message, a message about who God is, about God's loving rule of and care for the world and the individual regardless of outward circumstances, about one's own unworthiness and the fact of God's forgiveness. These ideas come to be believed: certainty of their truth is awakened and confidence is aroused, as a result of seeing the propositions enfolded in the attractive, magnetic, personal life of Jesus. Assurance and confidence give rise to certain acts of will, the first of which is the decision to trust God and to accept the offered forgiveness. This confidence and trust bring a sense of joyful release to the individual, who is thus empowered emotionally and motivated to act morally and fulfil the old/new law of love.

Working backwards, the effect of divine/spritual empowering is an emotional state of joyful freedom and a moral state of loving activity. This effect is made possible by an act of will by which one decides to trust God and accept forgiveness. What makes this act of will possible, almost inevitable? What empowers this alteration of direction and increase in personal power? The answer of course is divine power at work in the human spirit, but this still begs the question of how that power affects the will. Harnack's answer, to borrow Ritschl's metaphor, is an ellipse with two foci. In his view divine energy energises the human through the interaction of idea and personality. We find a rough parallel in Mann's two concepts of the importance of the idea of transcendence, and the indispensability of the articulate individual who arises to offer the new explanation of the social situation.

In Christianity and History Harnack attests to the synergistic force of ideas and personality:

"Whence comes the strength of the strong, and the deed of the doer? Whence comes it that the knowledge that might advance us, the thought that might save us, is transmitted from one generation to another as barren and worthless and dead as a stone, until some one seizes it and strikes it into fire? Whence comes that higher order of marriage, where a thought so unites with a soul that each is merged in the other, and belongs to the other, and masters the will? Whence comes the courage that conquers the resistance of a dull and unfeeling world? Whence comes the living power that begets a living conviction? It is a very limited psychology which fails to see that these are the real levers of history..." [Christianity and History, London, A.C. Black, 1896, p.32].

ii. The power of ideas

The ability of certain ideas to empower, energise and transform individual and social life was one of Harnack's root assumptions, shared with the idealist philosophers and constituting one side of the idealism versus materialism debate in the social sciences to this day. Harnack makes a distinction between two kinds of knowledge, and hence, two ways of processing ideas. The first sort of knowledge is that which is intimately tied to feeling and active life and is allied with the simple content of the gospel, and which ought to control and determine religious feeling [HD I p.18]. The second kind of knowledge is that which is detached, speculative and explanatory, part of the theory of religion rather than of religion itself.

Both kinds of knowledge have a role to play in religion: the first is virtually identical with Harnack's concept of idea. But the second is also needed. It can endanger the spiritual life, as witnessed by the effects of dogma upon the progress of the gospel [HD I p.20]. Harnack notes that "...men are ever prone to compound with religion itself by a religious theory" [HD I p.43], and that the philosophy of Philo's time had come to recognise the need for revelation because; "...knowledge resting on itself had learnt by experience its inability to attain to the truth in which blessedness consists" [HD I p.112]. Knowledge as speculation becomes one of Harnack's chief enemies because it so often acts as a fetter to or a substitute for genuinely spiritual life. But dangerous though it may be, Christianity cannot do without Harnack's second type of knowledge. It is necessary apologetically, and, according to Harnack, the spiritual character of the Christian religion will at all times feel the need for a scientific apologetic [HD I p.18]. Thus there is a place for the second kind of knowledge within Christianity, for faith is not just undefined, rootless religious feeling, but does and must have reference to objective realities such as God and the life of Jesus Christ. These two 'kinds' of knowledge might better be represented as two ways or levels of knowing, of processing ideas. The second way selects what ideas shall be deemed significant for the individual. The first way admits these ideas into the life, habitual thought, feeling and action of the individual. Only when this latter action occurs does an idea have power.

Harnack's writings are full of examples of powerful ideas having direct practical consequences—for better and for worse—in the church (e.g. M&E I pp.153-161, 222, 393; HD II p.318, HD III pp.110, 113, 117, 141; HD IV p.46; HD V pp.9, 52, 72, 1041. Even Mann, who ultimately espouses the materialist view of first origins for all human powers, emphasises the 'tracklaying' capacity of ideological power once a certain level of civilisation has been reached, indicating that conditions do arise when persons and societies will sacrifice their economic, political and military power interests in order to fulfil ideological objectives. As we have seen, an idea for Harnack represented not a cold unit of thought but something full of life and potentiality [WC? p.136/DW p.99]. Its activity, however, was not always necessarily beneficial. For instance, the idea of the Logos bore, in his view, much bitter fruit in power terms, increasing the mystery, prestige and authority of priests and theologians and placing the laity in perpetual tutelage [HD III pp.137f; see ch. 6 below]. Dogmatic Christianity, he maintains, though it can combine with the living religion of the gospel, always remains intellectual Christianity and therefore always in danger of supplanting religious faith with knowledge, of having faith in a doctrine of religion instead of in God [HD I p.16]. In such a case the power of ideas, which with regard to the gospel is meant to lead to personal, living experience of the divine, becomes an end in itself, and in Harnack's view, a dead end.

The ideas of the gospel are profound rather than complex, and Harnack maintains that their power is linked to their purity and simplicity [WC? p.51/DW p.33, WC? pp.47-48, 180, 212, 275; HD I p.94, HD II p.318; M&E I pp.84-85]. The 'gospel in the gospel' is easy to distinguish: it speaks to us with so much power that it cannot easily be mistaken [WC? p.14/DW p.9]. Always Harnack insists that it is the simplest ideas which are the most profound, carry the most truth and evoke the strongest conviction in individual lives. Why this should be so appears to have been something which he felt no need to explain.

With regard to the gospel, ideas are a vehicle for divine/spiritual power in that they evoke confidence and certainty in the believer. Chief among those ideas is that of God as the loving Father upon whom, regardless of the outward circumstances of life, one can rely. This powerful idea awakens the response of assurance or confidence (ultimately, certitudo salutis), which in turn transforms the emotional and moral life of the individual. In describing Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom, Harnack maintains that Jesus broke through the national-political and sensuous expectations which had surrounded Jewish eschatology for the previous two hundred years and spoke of a spiritual kingdom which was both future and yet present. Even now, Jesus taught, every individual who is called into the Kingdom may call on God as Father, and be sure of the gracious will of God, the hearing of his prayers, the forgiveness of his sins, and of the protection of God [HD I p.62].

The theme of confidence and certainty emerges again when Harnack discusses the inestimable value of the individual human soul as demonstrated in the preaching of Jesus and in his proclamation of the sure hope of the resurrection. The passage also illustrates the subtle and intimate relationship which Harnack posits for the power of ideas and the power of personality. The discussion concludes of Jesus:

"He himself therefore is Christianity, for the 'impression of his person convinced the disciples of the facts of forgiveness of sin and the second birth, and gave them the courage to believe in and to lead a new life'. We cannot therefore state the 'doctrine' of Jesus: for it appears as a supramundane life which must be felt in the person of Jesus, and its truth is guaranteed by the fact that such a life can be lived" [HD I pp.70-71].

Thus the disciples received, from observing and interacting with Jesus, a guarantee of the truth of what he taught, and the conviction and courage to follow in his footsteps. What is transformed is not the conditions of our existence but our attitude: we can come so to encounter nature's blind and brutal course that all things of necessity work together for good. The radical mistrust which is both the guilt and the punishment of sin is replaced by radical trust in the Father of Jesus Christ, in whom we have forgiveness of sins and adoption as beloved children. The result is joy, victory over selfishness and futility, 'the glorious liberty of the children of God', and a new ability to practise love.

In Harnack's discussion of the resurrection we again find the power of ideas, in terms of the importance of the conviction which an idea can arouse, presented as a central power of the gospel. The resurrection of Christ, he notes, became the assurance for believers that they too would be raised from death. "This conviction, whose reverse side is the fear of that God who casts into hell, has become the mightiest power through which the gospel has won humanity" [HD I p.84].

Harnack's account of Luther underscores the theme of the power released when one is certain of the truth of a great idea. In Harnack's view Luther's message to Christendom was "...the living faith in the God who in Christ addresses to the poor soul the words: 'I am thy salvation', ...the firm assurance that God is the Being on whom one can place reliance" [HD VII p.172]. Harnack says of Luther's Christianity that:

"Out of a complex system of expiations, good deeds and comfortings, of strict statutes and uncertain apportionments of grace, out of magic and of blind obedience, he led religion forth and gave it a strenuously concentrated form. The Christian religion is the living assurance of the living God, who has revealed Himself and opened his heart in Christ—nothing else..." [HD VII pp.183-184].

Harnack continues and points out the psychological consequences of this confidence in God:

"For Luther, the whole of religion was contained within this circle. The living God—not a philosophical or mystical abstraction—the God manifest, certain, the God of grace, accessible to every Christian. Unwavering trust of the heart in Him who has given himself to us in Christ as our Father, personal assurance of faith, because Christ with His work undertakes our cause—this became for him the entire sum of religion. Rising above all anxieties and terrors, above all ascetic devices, above all directions of theology, above all interventions of hierarchy and Sacraments, he ventured to lay hold of God Himself in Christ, and in this act of his faith, which he recognised as God's

work, his whole being obtained stability and firmness, nay, even a personal certainty and joy, such as no medieval man had ever possessed. From perceiving that 'with force of arms we nothing can' he derived the utmost freedom and force; for he now knew the power which imparts to the life steadfastness and peace; he knew it, and called it by its name. Faith...it was the certainty of forgiveness of sins, and therefore also the personal and continuous surrender to God as the Father of Jesus Christ, which transforms and renews the whole man...; faith is a living, busy, active thing, a sure confidence, which makes a man joyful and happy towards God and all creatures" [HD VII pp.184-185; see also HD VII pp.171-174, 210-212].

The power released through faith in the gospel produces courage and joy. This courage is 'a resolute and iron energy of will'. In a 1917 meditation on 2 Timothy 1:7 he writes:

"...The Gospel speaks not only of humility (Demut) but, if we read it aright it speaks quite as often of courage (Mut). Jesus Christ was a Hero, and His disciples should be heroes too. His whole career was a heroic fight against the evil, ignorance, stupidity and hostility which surrounded Him. But He became neither weary nor dull nor impatient; on the contrary, to the very end He preserved a spirit of power and endurance. But power also means joy, and all sense of power, whether of mind or body, is also a feeling of joy...God gives us the spirit of power, that is of courage and joyfulness" [ST p.44].

In Harnack's understanding, as noted earlier, the absolutely pivotal idea upon which all else in Christianity stands or falls is that of the character of God. Becoming convinced of the truth of the idea of a God who loves and who is reliable is the first and indispensable step in the process of the new birth, and the beginning of the empowering of the human spirit by the divine:

"...While Jesus himself was exhibiting this love, and making it a life and power, his disciples were learning the highest and holiest thing that can be learned in all religion, namely, to believe in the love of God..." [M&E I p.148].

For all his christocentrism, in the end for Harnack it is one's view of the character of God which makes the difference. 'The fatherhood of God' has become such a cliché that it is only with difficulty that we can discern the possibility of the impact—the surprise and joyous relief, that a deep comprehension of the news that the mysterious, lofty, inscrutable creator and source of the universe desires to relate to human beings as loving parent to precious child, and is, in the face of a changing, dubious and apparently futile world, the person on whom one can rely—which Harnack, in using this phrase, sought to communicate. It is this joyful astonishment which is the fundamental spiritual experience to which Harnack ceaselessly points us, and the good news which Jesus both preached and enfolded.

Rightly to comprehend the character of God is to have access to all the blessings of the gospel. Equally, misapprehensions of the divine character lead to mistakes in religion which distort and impair the work of

divine/spiritual power. For example, the reason Harnack offers for what he sees as Aquinas' defective concept of grace lies in his defective concept of God, a God who is "...inscrutable self-will, and who, just on that account, has set up an inscrutable arbitrary institution of grace as an establishment for the insurance of life" [HD VI p.281]. If this one idea is correctly understood, all else flows from it, and as we shall see, the character of God forms the focal point for Harnack's explanation of the effectiveness of the atonement [see ch. 4 below].

iii. The power of personality

According to Harnack, an idea empowers by creating conviction and confidence, leading to beneficial activity in the external world, because, and only because, it is embodied in and guaranteed by a powerful personality. All revelation comes through persons, and truth must be embodied in an actual life if it is to be credible [R&A nf.2 p.69; see Kaltenborn, pp.103-104]. Harnack describes neoplatonism as deficient in that it lacked a founder, which meant that it developed no elemental force and never lost the character of being an artificial creation [HD III p.317]. Historically, the ideas of the gospel find their guarantee in the personality of Jesus. It is because the gospel is not a question of creeds and definitions but of a personal power-encounter that Harnack sees Jesus as inextricably bound up with it. No one could have believed more in the power of ideas than Harnack, but he just as clearly knew that on their own, "...words effect nothing; it is the power of the personality that stands behind them" [WC? p.48/DW pp.30-31]. No idea survives and grows unless exemplified in a personality. Jesus, then, is synonymous with the divine/spiritual power of the gospel, for he embodied it in his life, teachings and death; furthermore, he had, and still has, the capacity to awaken the joyous and empowering experience of Gotteskindschaft in all those who trust him [WC? p.51/DW p.33]. Jesus very quickly came to be seen as the strength (Kraft) of a new existence, the active principle of individual life—"not I but Christ living in me" [WC? pp.154-155/DW p.97]. The 'strength' here referred to seems to be more than the power of an idea: it is that of a living and singularly powerful personality. It was the power of this personality, rather than the empty tomb, which Harnack sees as the earliest disciples' ultimate foundation for their belief in the resurrection [WC? p.163/DW pp.102-103; HD I p.86 n.11].

Sykes places Harnack's emphasis on personality in its apologetic context. He writes:

"...In every way it suited Harnack to emphasize Jesus' personality or character. For a post-Kantian era which had given up proving Jesus' divinity by prophecy or miracle, the personality of Christ was still a potent argument, personality being, for a certain type of idealism, the highest category of created reality. In presenting the power of Christianity, therefore, as the agent *par excellence* in the formation or moulding of personality Harnack was performing a double apologetic service" [Identity, p.145; see also p.141].

In Wrong's terms the power of the personality of Jesus fits closely into the type of charismatic authority, with the proviso that whereas Wrong describes the power of charismatic leaders as accorded to them and

authenticated by their followers, Harnack would argue that the authority of Jesus was accorded to him and authenticated by God. Another difference is the manner in which the problem of succession, perennial for charismatic authority, is solved: the resurrection means that Jesus as charismatic leader does not need to be replaced, for the living Christ continues to be present and active. (The debate about who should exercise the right to interpret that presence is another question.) In addition to charismatic authority, the power of Jesus can also be described as competent authority: Jesus' unique knowledge of the Father gives him a special claim on our attention and obedience.

Many historical personalities are noted as powerful by Harnack—Paul, Athanasius and Augustine, Luther and Fichte, for examples. We see in his treatment of major historical figures the intimate connexion between a powerful idea and its embodiment in a powerful personality [HD IV p.26; HD V p.64]. Harnack testifies to the ability of such persons to take hold of the inner life of others [WC? p.10/DW p.6; HD I p.92], and Harnack affirms that Jesus possessed this ability to an unparalleled degree [WC? p.49/DW p.31]. He uses the fire image for the ability of personality to lead personality to a higher level: the fire is kindled from outside, but once the blaze is lit, it burns independently and can in turn kindle others [WC? p.11/DW p.7; *ibid.* pp.145-146/pp.91-92]. Harnack holds that in the great majority of cases in the early years, it was example and the personal manifestation of the Christian life which led to imitation and conversion [M&E I p.87].

The significance of Jesus is that he kindles the fire of divine/spiritual power in the individual by standing as the guarantor, within the iron ring, of the personality, or character, of God which is supremely powerful and in which we are invited to have confidence. Harnack praises Luther for restoring 'the religious way of understanding the gospel' [HD VII p.172], i.e. as a sure confidence in a person, the Father of Jesus Christ. Luther shows us the power of simplicity in the realm of ideas, for he reduced and simplified the overburdened tradition into a strenuously concentrated form. This form was centred on sure confidence (assurance) in the idea that the God revealed in Jesus Christ is the person upon whom one can rely. It is the source of all transformation, renewal, power, joy and freedom for the Christian soul and the foundation of its dominion over the world. This, as noted above, is the great idea of the gospel, an idea which if true points to a great Personality whose love and reliability is the source of the believer's empowering. Thus idea and personality are inseparable, both for the personality of God and the personality of Jesus, without whom we would not have the confidence to trust the great idea.

Harnack was frequently accused of excluding Jesus from his definition of the gospel on the basis of his historical distinction between the gospel Jesus preached and the gospel which the early church preached about Jesus (das doppelte Evangelium). On one occasion in Das Wesen, and the only one I have been able to discover in the Harnackean corpus, Harnack says that it was Jesus' "... peculiar greatness to have led men to God, so that they may thenceforth live their own life with Him," [WC? p.11/DW p.7]. But taken as a whole, anything other than a superficial reading of his work, and even of Das Wesen, where the stones of stumbling most blatantly appear, shows that this is not the case. He repeatedly insists that Jesus is inseparable

from his gospel [e.g. WC? pp.145-146]. The power of personality and the power of ideas mutually reinforce each other. The two are expressed in Harnack's phrase, 'the image of Jesus and the power which proceeded from it' [HD I p.80].

Thus in Harnack's teaching on personality it appears that even great ideas—the Fatherhood of God, the infinite value of the human soul, the Kingdom of God, forgiveness and love—only engender divine/spiritual power when they are experienced in the contact with a personality which embodies the ideas. Such a statement could be construed as an encouragement to the pursuit of mystical experience of the risen Christ, but it is unlikely that that was Harnack's meaning. For him the risen Christ speaks still through the words of the gospels, and through the lives of historical and contemporary Christians. In chapter four we will look in more detail at the significance of personality for Harnack's christological thought, and in chapter five the mutual reinforcement of idea and personality will become evident in Harnack's treatment of grace.

iv. Evaluation

Divine/spiritual power empowers human beings, in Wrong's terms, via the operation of charismatic and competent authority predicated upon what Rollo May terms nutrient power, attributed to (Feuerbach and Durkheim would say, projected upon) the character of God. The operation of these powers produces predictable and beneficial effects upon the emotional and ethical states of individuals who become convinced of the truth of the gospel ideas of the divine character and who allow themselves to be influenced by the charismatic and competent authority of the personality of Jesus. While the categories of charismatic and competent authority 'fit' the case of the powerful personality of Jesus, Wrong has no category in his typology which fits the empowering rôle of ideas. This can most probably be explained by his indicated intention of dealing with interpersonal power only and leaving out the realm of psychology, for ideas, if they generate power at all, do so within the psychology of individuals.

As noted above, the power of personality finally has the ascendancy because only through demonstration in a personal life can an idea, however potentially compelling, become convincing and contagious. Harnack also believed that the great individual, acting under the conviction of a great idea, was the primary causal agent in history ["History is but the elongated shadows of great men"; R&A nf.4 p.11]. What must perhaps be questioned is whether ideas, and personalities shaped by ideas, actually have that primary causal rôle, or whether they are not as much effects as causes. We are also left unsure whether in Harnack's view divine/spiritual power could ever be 'pure', i.e., experienced directly, or whether intermingling with ordinary human powers was inevitable. The ambivalence is represented by Harnack's two metaphors for divine/spiritual power, the 'purist' husk and kernel metaphor, and the 'integrationist' metaphor of the bark and the sap. This ambiguity is symptomatic of the dualistic distinction Harnack draws between internal and external powers, and, as we explore his work in greater detail, we must ask ourselves how adequate, and indeed workable, such a dualism can be [see ch.7 pp.162f].

Notes to chapter three (The power of God at work in the world)

3.a. Affirming the power of God in the modern situation

1. However, as Glick points out, while Ritschl accepted Kant's limitation of pure reason, he differed from him in that where Kant's religion is practically an annex to morals, Ritschl's has an independent basis in history [Glick, Reality, p.511].

2. Rumscheidt holds that such a theology becomes either stagnant or impossible, and sees Barth's line as the only way out [Rumscheidt p.195]. The positivist epistemology with which Rumscheidt erroneously credits Harnack was, he asserts, the epistemology which has characterised western thought, and especially western science, for a very long time. It includes the sharp distinction between subject and object, the clear divisions between being, action and cognition, and the possibility of the direct cognition of the object via the suppression of any particularities in the subject [ibid. pp.177-178]. This epistemology, Rumscheidt points out, has been defunct in the realm of physics since Planck, Einstein and Heisenberg. "Modern physics has called a halt to that kind of epistemology and ontology in the realm of science. It appears to me that the theology of Karl Barth does the same for theology for which reason I call it a reformatory theology, "[ibid. p.179]. It seems odd that Harnack is criticised for being in thrall to the scientific Weltanschauung of his time, but Barth is praised for paralleling the progress of science.

3. The tragedy of Christianity in Harnack's view is the rapidity with which the church, the promulgator of the gospel preaching and thus of this inner divine/spiritual power, became a primary suppressor of it. In its struggle to continue and expand its work of creating free children of God, the gospel soon was in conflict not only with 'nature' and the 'world', but also with the church [see ch.6 below].

CHAPTER FOUR: THE DIVINE POWER ENERGISES THE HUMAN THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

4.a. Introduction

In section 3.b., we examined how Harnack answered the second question in general terms, but, as the centre and ground of Harnack's theological thought was Jesus, a more detailed examination of his christological thought is required in order to fully establish his answer to the question of how it is that divine/spiritual power empowers human beings. We see in his work the attempt, not always successful, to develop a christology which is not reductionist but which operates entirely within the iron ring. In order to do this, Harnack parts company with chalcedonian understandings of the person of Christ and uses instead his paired concepts of the power of ideas and the power of personality. In Jesus supremely the two means of divine empowering coalesce.

Harnack objected to the separation in theology of the person of Christ from his work. The personality, teaching, work, death and resurrection of Jesus constitute a unity which may not without injury to true religion be divided, and Harnack criticises traditional dogma for dividing person and work and subordinating the latter to the former. The work of Christ, wrongfully neglected in favour of speculations concerning the mystery of Christ's person, forms the major interest in Harnack's christology: christology for him is solely about redemption. Harnack's objection to compartmentalisation is valid, and should be borne in mind throughout the following discussion, which will continue to use the two categories of person and work only for convenience of expression.

Special attention will be given in this discussion to a monograph which appeared in the same year as Das Wesen, entitled 'Christus als Erlöser' [R&A nf.2 pp.81-93]. Its concentrated focus on the subject of redemption makes it valuable for our objective of understanding Harnack's christological thought in the same way that Das Wesen's specific focus is valuable for our understanding of the essence of Christianity. Another similarity to Das Wesen is the article's strongly apologetic flavour: it addresses itself less to the believing church than to the sceptical, searching modern world. This focus is corroborated, supplemented and balanced by the treatments in the longer historical works, most notably in Dogmengeschichte, where the tone is less apologetic and more doctrinal.

4.b. The person of Christ: who is Jesus?

It is Harnack's handling of what traditional theology terms christology which has earned him the fiercest criticism. (Neufeld's handling of Harnack's christology contributes much to its rehabilitation, although in his admirable concern to refute the prejudice and misunderstanding which has surrounded this area he perhaps makes Harnack more orthodox than he really was [see Neufeld (1977) pp.316ff]). What is frequently misconstrued as a rejection of the divinity of Christ is in fact Harnack's rejection of two-nature christology: Harnack would argue that to reject the chalcedonian formulae for the expression of Christ's divinity is not the same thing as rejecting his divinity altogether.

Harnack maintains that the adoption of the Logos doctrine as the central dogma of the church was obtained in the first place through the disreputable manipulations of ecclesiastical and political power [HD III p.58, HD IV p.196], and that its adoption had far-reaching consequences both in terms of the accessibility of divine/spiritual power to individuals and in terms of ecclesiastical power relations. Along with being unhistorical, unbiblical and untrue, it contradicted and obscured the Jesus of the gospels, who is the source of our spiritual power, and could render those who followed it wholly incapable of understanding or applying the tradition that God redeemed humanity through Jesus [HD III p.137]. The adoption of the Logos doctrine had the effect of depotentiating and alienating ordinary believers: only theologians and priests could understand its complicated speculations, and all others were left with a faith which was a holy mystery to be accepted in obedience. This mystification led believers ever deeper into reliance upon and submission to the authority of church and clergy [HD II p.300, III p.3; see also ch.6 below]. Yet, Harnack insists, under cover of the official dogmatic formulae, quite a different christology developed in the west which emphasised Christ's humanity in that its doctrine of redemption hinged on a man whose mediation was a voluntary achievement. We find the vividness and thrilling power of 'Ecce homo', and the church christology becoming nothing but a formula. Harnack holds that the western view—in which Christ was the object of the Father's grace, carried out what the Father entrusted to him, and by him was exalted—corresponded to the clearest passages of the New Testament [HD V pp.53-55]. It is with this view that Harnack wishes to identify himself.

Harnack's estimate of the person of Christ is similar in very many respects to Ritschl's. Following Melancthon ('to know Christ is to know his benefits'), they both locate Christ's divinity in the grace and truth (Treue) and the lordship over the world which is visible in his life and death. Jesus' divinity is a value-judgment (Werturteil), as, according to Ritschl, it was for Luther. Ritschl and Harnack honour Jesus as God because of the salvation (Heil) which he brings, which is very different from the disinterested, academic Erkenntnis of the chalcedonian formula [Meijering (1978) p.47]. Harnack's intention was to reject all metaphysical speculation (though it may be argued that he in fact imports another metaphysic) and put into its place historical reflection and ethical judgments of value. It is not Christ's nature, but his Gesinnung and Willensrichtung which are unique and divine. Harnack recognises his own christology in that of Paul of Samosata, and regrets that after Paul's rejection a belief in the pre-existence of Christ became mandatory. Harnack considered this to be a victory of platonism within Christian doctrine, which displaced the historical, that is the real, Christ. Harnack did not, however, completely dismiss the idea of pre-existence, but taught an ideal form of it, i.e., that the life of Christ was hidden within the eternal loving will of God [ibid. p.49; see R&A bd.I, pp.294f; HD I p.331]. Harnack held, with Ritschl, that Christian faith has to do primarily with the work of Christ, and that expressions concerning his nature are in fact value-judgments concerning his workings upon believers. This leads in Harnack to a sharp critique of 'metaphysical christology' in the ancient and medieval church [ibid. p.50].

In order to indicate the shape of Harnack's christology it is necessary to take issue with the conclusions reached by that most charitable of critics, Kaltenborn. He maintains that while it was always Harnack's intention not to exclude the divine from his strong emphasis on the humanity of Jesus [Kaltenborn, pp.122-123], it was an intention which failed, and which was more perfectly fulfilled by Bonhoeffer. He holds that where Bonhoeffer's emphasis on the humanity of Jesus and affection for the subordinationist christology of Paul of Samosata was a Jesuanismus within a chalcedonian christology, Harnack's was a Jesuanismus in which the humanity of Jesus and the divine are in isolation from one another [ibid. pp.122-123]. God in the end is not revealed as God in sich, but remains the deus absconditus [ibid. p.64]. Kaltenborn is sketchy as to the reasons for his conclusion that Harnack's clear and acknowledged intention does not work. It may be that in his view the rejection of the chalcedonian formula in itself makes this inevitable. But if Harnack declined to pronounce upon the nature of God in sich, confining his attention to God pro nobis as revealed in Christ, he has not only the epistemology of Kant as an impetus, but also the example of Luther.

Kaltenborn also is mistaken in ascribing a positive place in Harnack's theology to the Logos, identifying it in Harnack's terminology with the Spirit of God, and it is significant that he must draw upon Nachlass material to make the point [ibid. pp.50f, 61]. After his painstaking and clearly negative delineation of the origins of Logos christology which form the central theme of Dogmengeschichte it seems very improbable that Harnack could have adopted the term for himself in a positive way.

Harnack's impatience with the false particularities of two-nature christology is evident in Das Wesen, though at its clearest in Dogmengeschichte. As noted above, he emphasises the need to take historical events as the reference-points and to measure Christ's importance in terms of his moral qualities and the impact of his personality. Harnack has often been, on the basis of his concern for the historical Jesus, lumped with the 'life of Jesus' writers of the nineteenth century, though he expressly denied the possibility of writing such a 'life' as early as 1874 [Kaltenborn, p.30]. He clearly distances himself from such an approach:

"The 'historical Christ' that, to be sure, is not the powerless Christ of contemporary history shewn to us through a coloured biographical medium, or dissipated in all sorts of controversies, but Christ as a power and as a life which towers above our own life and enters into our life as God's Spirit and God's Word" [HD I p.72].

Harnack again and again insists that even a portrait of Jesus arrived at by means of the best historical method is not the real Jesus. Kaltenborn reminds us of the counterpoise in Harnack to his confident insistence on the importance of history, which was his conviction that the flow of history always rationalises, levels and corrupts, and that tradition is therefore always far away from true remembrance. For Harnack this means that every certitude of salvation remains out of the question which is to be believed simply because of the agency of the stream of history. One cannot apprehend Jesus through mere historical knowledge [Kaltenborn p.30].

Harnack's own experiential view of Christ's divinity is that:

"...no one who accepts the Gospel, and tries to understand him who gave it to us, can fail to affirm that here the divine appeared in as pure a form as it can appear on earth, and to feel that for those who followed him Jesus was himself the strength (Kraft) of the Gospel. What they experienced they have told the world; and their message is still a living force" [WC? p.146].

The experience of the earliest disciples confirms this impression, for those who had eaten and drunk with their Master were prepared to glorify him: "...not only as the revealer of God, but as the Prince of life, as the Redeemer and Judge of the world, as the living power of its existence" [HD I p.76].

The discussion of the title 'Son of God' in Das Wesen illustrates how the significance of Jesus is described in Harnack in terms of the interaction of powerful ideas (the knowledge of the Father) with Jesus' powerful personality. Harnack equates Christ's power with his knowledge of the Father:

"...Rightly understood the name of Son means nothing but the knowledge of God...how he came to the consciousness of his power and to the consciousness of the obligation and mission which this power carries with it is his secret, and no psychology will ever fathom it..." [WC? p.128].

The personality forged in this secret process was assured of its mission: Jesus was to communicate his knowledge of God to others, and he was equally assured that in God's strength he could accomplish the task. It was, says Harnack, out of this feeling of power (Kraftgefühl) and in the prospect of victory that he uttered the words, 'the Father hath committed all things unto me' [ibid]. Complete belief in the great ideas concerning the Father empowered Jesus to communicate them to others, and the vigour of his personal life gave further credence to the ideas themselves. His powerful personality acted upon the personalities of others, creating life and strength [WC? p.10/DW p.6], empowering their own struggles with 'nature' and ensuring them of victory. From the personality of Jesus a chain-reaction went forth:

"...ein Christ erzieht den anderen, an einem Gemüt entzündet sich das andere, und die Kraft, das zu wollen, was man billigt, entspringt aus der geheimnisvollen Macht, durch die ein Leben das andere erweckt. Am Ende dieser Reihe von Boten und Kräften Gottes steht Jesus Christus..." ['Das Christentum und die Geschichte', R&A bd.II, p.12].

As mentioned in 3.b. above, Harnack's expressions concerning das doppelte Evangelium, earned him much criticism, as he was understood to be identifying as the true gospel the gospel of Jesus' preaching only and subordinating Jesus to that gospel. It is clear, however, from Dogmengeschichte that this was never his intention: "...for in preaching this gospel Jesus Christ everywhere calls men to himself. In him the Gospel is word and deed; it has become his food, and therefore his personal life, and into this life of his he draws all others" [HD I p.59].

Harnack insists, however, that Jesus did not thrust this connexion of the gospel with himself into the foreground because: "...No words could have certified it unless his life, the overpowering impression of his Person, had created it" [ibid.]. Certainly 'the gospel' is the one which Jesus preached, and it has only fulfilled its mission when the Father has been declared to humanity and where life is swayed by the realities and principles which ruled Jesus' life. But: "...it is in accordance with the mind of Jesus and at the same time a fact of history, that this Gospel can only be appropriated and adhered to in connection with a believing surrender to the person of Jesus Christ" [HD I p.71]. In declaring himself to be the Messiah Jesus gave an intelligible expression of his abiding significance for the disciples and his people; and also at the end of his life, and earlier on special occasions, he indicated that the surrender to his person was no passing element in their relationship to God: rather it corresponds to the service Jesus will perform for them and for the many—to give his life as a sacrifice for the sins of the world:

"...He who in his preaching of the kingdom of God raised the strictest self-examination and humility to a law, and exhibited them to his followers in his own life, has described with clear consciousness his life crowned by death as the imperishable service by which men in all ages will be cleansed from their sin and made joyful in their God. By doing so he put himself far above all others, although they were to become his brethren; and claimed a unique and permanent importance as Redeemer and Judge. This permanent importance as the Lord he secured, not by disclosures about the mystery of his Person, but by the impression of his life and the interpretation of his death. He interprets it, like all his sufferings, as a victory, as the passing over to his glory, and in spite of the cry of God-forsakenness upon the cross, he has proved himself able to awaken in his followers the real conviction that he lives and is Lord and Judge of the living and the dead..." [HD I p.60].

Jesus makes it clear that he is not just a prophet but Lord, and proves it on earth by the accomplishment of mighty deeds, especially in opposition to the devil and his kingdom, and by his death as a *λυτρον* for the redemption of humanity [HD I pp.65-66]. The question of how Harnack interprets these mighty deeds will be explored in chapter five, and the redemptive significance of Jesus' death in 4.c below.

In summary we may say that Harnack's thought about the person of Christ is characterised by the following points:

1. He was unwilling to go beyond the evidence of Jesus' own words, as recorded in the synoptic gospels, with regard to his pre-existence and to the precise nature of his relationship with the Father [HD I pp.318f]. Harnack maintains a clear distinction between, and the complete subordination of, the Son to the Father [HD I pp.64f, n.3], and he is at odds not only with the full-blown Logos doctrine, but with its antecedents in Pauline and Johannine christology. The idea of the Logos secularised the idea of the power of Christ, which previously had been experienced as the power of a new life lived in union with him, of simple, personal moral earnestness. Through the importation and development of the idea of the Logos within Christianity, the power of Christ became seen as a cosmic

force, non-personal, prior to and independent of relationship [HD I pp.328-330].

2. Jesus is seen as the mediator of true knowledge of the Father to others, such knowledge being not mere information but the possibility of a deep interaction of personalities. Christ is to be evaluated according to his spiritual and moral effectiveness.

3. Jesus is the supremely powerful personality who takes hold of and transforms the inner life of others. The authority of his teaching springs from the personality which stands behind it ('hinter jeder Spruche steht er selbst') [WC? p.48/DW pp.30-31; *ibid.* p.163/pp.102-103; HD I pp.41,133].

4. The kingdom of God which Jesus preached had already begun to arrive in his saving and healing activity, in the forgiveness of sins in which all other blessings were comprehended. This came through the service of his life crowned with death [WC? p.122].

5. Though not the conquering hero of contemporary expectation, Jesus may rightly be called Messiah: there is a paradox in his power—a divine strength and glory which needs no earthly power and splendour, and indeed which excludes them [WC? p.138].

6. Jesus' divinity is confirmed in experiential terms: for those who followed him, and for those who follow him now, Jesus himself is the strength/power (*Kraft*) of the gospel. The experience and message of these followers is still a living force [WC? p.146].

7. The gospel empowers believers by convincing them of the true character of God: by looking to the historical person of Jesus, one becomes certain that God the powerful Judge is also Father and Redeemer [HD I p.60].

4.c. The work of Christ: redemption

1. Introduction

Harnack was convinced that the question as to what Jesus is in himself was not the principal question, and was one which, on epistemological grounds, he would have been happy to set aside. The right way to evaluate Jesus is firstly to consider what we as individuals and the world as a whole would be without this person, and secondly to try to live after his example and suffer with him, to carry our own crosses and be confident of God as our Father. *Mitleben* with Christ is the important thing, and all expressions concerning the worth of Jesus only have worth themselves to the extent that they spring out of and are evoked by this life with him [AZH pp.93-94]. To use the traditional distinctions, for Harnack Jesus' significance is determined by his work rather than his person: Christ *pro nobis* is Christ the redeemer.

The work of Christ was conceived more broadly by Harnack than was traditional, and as a result he was accused of ignoring or denying the concept central to orthodox Lutheranism, namely the death of Christ as a

vicarious atonement for sin. Harnack replied to this accusation in his preface to the printing of the 45-50,000th copies of Das Wesen, once again taking his stand on the basis of history. This interpretation of Christianity, he said, based on the thought of Paul, Augustine and Luther, was a valid one, but to identify it with Christianity itself is to mistake the part for the whole and to narrow the foundation of the religion which Jesus himself had laid. Historical integrity impelled him to examine the preaching of Jesus and all of its outworkings. One could, he notes, agree with Paul, Augustine or Luther without onesidedly seeing them as the whole [DW pp.iv-v]. As we shall see, despite Harnack's insistence on a broader perspective for understanding the work of Christ and despite a reinterpretation of traditional categories, he continued to share substantial common ground with Paul, Augustine and Luther. Meijering convincingly argues that he remained much nearer than Ritschl to the Augustinian-Reformed tradition in the doctrines of sin and grace, and made them the standard for every doctrine of redemption [Meijering (1978) p.46].

Harnack criticises traditional doctrines of redemption for ignoring the basics and for that reason falling into a double error. He writes in Dogmengeschichte:

"...Wo das Einfachste und Schwerste nicht getroffen wird, die Kindschaft und der Glaube gegenüber der Schuld der Sünde, da ist die Frömmigkeit und die Spekulation dazu verurteilt, die Physis und die Moral (die natura divina und das bonum esse) in unendlichen Spekulationen zu behandeln" [quoted *ibid.* p.39].

A recalling of the most simple and most serious aspects of redemption—the recognition of one's position as a child of God while simultaneously recognising the radical seriousness of sin—and a recasting of soteriology in this light forms the basis of 'Christus als Erlöser'.

11. 'Christus als Erlöser'

The argument of this important essay [R&A nf.2 pp.81-93] is in three parts. The first attempts to define redemption and deal with the objections to the concept raised by the modern world-view. The second examines the idea that redemption can come through human channels, and the third explains how redemption can be connected specifically with Jesus Christ. Quotations throughout are from my translation.

Harnack begins the first part with the statement that Christianity is the religion of redemption because it is the religion of forgiveness, and has been since the 'forgive us our trespasses' of the Lord's Prayer and 'that paradigm of the Gospel', the parable of the prodigal son [p.81]. He notes, however, that for a variety of reasons, the certainty of redemption is gone from the modern world and, more importantly, the longing for it is almost extinguished. He offers several suggestions as to why this is so: some feel no need of redemption, others see no possibility of it. Some see the notion as weak and having no place in a strong, virile morality. Others cannot accept the connexion of a present redemption with an historical figure who died many centuries ago. The major difficulty, however, Harnack describes as the modern Weltanschauung. Psychology has given us a new picture of humanity, research into the origins of morality yields a

different point of view with regard to evil and sin, historical science has given us an historical Christ instead of a heavenly one, and critical philosophy has firmly delineated the boundaries of what is perceivable and real. The result of these labours seems to be that the concept of redemption can no longer be held.

Harnack responds to this challenge in a familiar way, using the essencing procedure. He admits that the form in which previous generations experienced and expressed the concepts of 'redemption' and 'redeemer' is invalidated in part for those today who think critically, but maintains that the kernel of the matter is still viable and contains a primary article of religious faith which does not lose its power. To support this claim, he reminds us of one tenet of his anthropology, which is the constancy and continuity of humankind. He quotes Goethe's famous „Die Menschheit schreitet immer fort, und der Mensch bleibt immer derselbe“, and insists that Augustine's words "Thou, Lord, hast made us for thyself, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in Thee" will find its echo in humanity as long as the race dwells on earth—and that the joyful message of redemption will survive just as long.

Furthermore, he argues, everyone does feel the longing for redemption, not just the ordinary desire to better one's situation or escape certain limitations and burdens, but rather that deeper emotion, the longing to become free from the ordinary Lauf des Lebens and win a higher and deeper existence. Unless one is practising deliberate self-deception, he maintains, this noble longing, "to raise oneself above the stream of ordinary doing and suffering", "to become free from the service of transitory things", is in everyone, though often weak and choked. The modern world is full of 'redeemers' promising to fulfil the longing: demonic ones such as drugs and debauchery, but also academic pursuits and art. And, Harnack adds, this modern longing for redemption still possesses a moral side, for anywhere that Christianity has had any influence, the recognition takes root that innocence and purity are the greatest good and guilt (Schuld) the greatest evil. Harnack maintains that it is not true that the majority of humanity is so sunk in the commonplace, sensual, self-centred struggle that it has lost the sense of the holy and pure and the longing for them. To be pure and to have inner peace, he says, is still the longing of all longings. Only speak the right word and you will find it in everyone.

Harnack further maintains that the modern Weltanschauung, with its emphasis on evolutionary development, runs the risk of denigrating the inner life and through learning the origin of moral perceptions seems at present to have lost the sense of their value. But, he argues, no Wissenschaft or Welterkenntnis can ultimately kill the longing for purity and inner peace, which is the longing for redemption. The fact that morality has developed from more primitive forms to higher ones will not always be seen as a limitation on its value: how we got here does not matter so much as the fact that we did. The beginnings of this moral development are lost in prehistory, but the latest stage began in the time of Socrates, Plato and the Israelite prophets and reached its fulfillment, within the Graeco-Roman world, through Christ and his disciples [ibid. p.85].

Harnack then describes this highest stage of moral development and asserts its intimate connexion with the idea of redemption. This stage brought humanity a new sense and life which is experienced not only as an external 'ought' but also as the revelation of our true nature and as an attainable goal. Harnack challenges the modern historians who try to say that the theme of world history is always simply the struggle for survival. While externally history, with its secret and open war and its struggle for earthly possessions, has not changed much, in this stage something new has been added. The deepest theme of personal life and world history is now the struggle between belief and unbelief, that is, the struggle over God and redemption. Supported by the power (Macht) of the ethical and holy, humanity struggles to be free from the service of transitory things and to build a kingdom of love—the Kingdom of God. The materialist historians are proved wrong by the thousands who still give up everything, even their lives, for the sake of ethical ideals. These sacrifices are made in the confidence that mere life is not the highest good, and the conviction is not one which has to be reasoned out: the ethical, the life with God, works with the gentle force (Gewalt) of a natural law.

With this idea in mind, says Harnack, we are now in the realm of redemption, which in the highest sense can only be the power (Macht) which helps us to lead a pure and holy life with God, and which fills us with the conviction that it is not an illusion to believe that we really do gain life when we lay it down.

Part two looks at how redemption could come through human beings. The problem is that if redemption is to make a supernatural kingdom possible, then redemption cannot come from an earthly source. Only God is the redeemer, so it appears that a human redeemer is an impossibility. Harnack's response to this problem is to discuss the redemptive role of the prophet. He says that it was the most important step in the history of religion when people stopped looking for God in sun or storm or strange natural event and began to seek the divine in the words of holy individuals. It was then that religion was bound together with the inner life and with morality. God was revealed in the spirit and the words of the prophets, and was regarded not with less awe than when seen in nature, but with more: "Then they learned that the real revelation of God can only happen in humanity, for God is holy, and holiness cannot reveal itself in nature" [ibid. p.88]. Prophets, says Harnack, are persons whose religious talent or capacity is so great that they can, almost without help, find and live in God, and they are inwardly compelled to share their experience. In a sense, the prophets were already redeemers, because people found God, the redeemer, through their preaching. It was not their own fire with which they burned: they were torches ignited by God, which could set alight the glimmering embers in others [ibid. p.89].

Having established that redemption in some sense can come via human beings, Harnack goes on to discuss why Christianity understands Jesus Christ to be not just a redeemer, but the Redeemer. Jesus was, says Harnack, a prophet, but he was also unique. Harnack then presents a series of 'historical facts' to substantiate this claim:

1. Christianity differentiates between Jesus and all prophets, recognising him alone as Saviour, on the basis of his own claim to uniqueness, which was supported by the evidence of his life.
2. Jesus was the last prophet: all 'prophets' since him have either been false, or else dependent upon him. (For this reason Harnack feels it is wrong to call great Christians like Paul, Francis or Luther prophets.)
3. Jesus is a prophet not for a small group, as the others were, but for many peoples and for an endless epoch: his universal appeal differs from that of the earlier prophets, which was limited in time and space.
4. Jesus brought the perfect consciousness of God as holy and almighty Father and merciful Love, in contrast to the earlier prophets, whose perception of God was imperfect and whose ideas corrected one another.
5. In previous prophets there was a contradiction between their perception and their actions, where in Jesus even the sharpest eye of hate could not find such a contradiction.

On the basis of these assertions Harnack concludes that it is right to make a distinction between Jesus and all other prophets. Jesus called himself the Son of God and had the right to do so. He taught his disciples to recognise God and he led them to God, and still today his gospel leads believers out of selfishness and sin and into life with God the redeemer.

In the third part of the essay, it becomes clear that Harnack has other grounds for his belief in Jesus' uniqueness, and that the redemption which he brings is more than the final prophetic revelation of God the Father. As a 'super-prophet' Jesus is already a 'super-redeemer' by virtue of bringing the perfect consciousness of God to humanity, but the oldest Christianity, Harnack notes, said still more of Christ than this: it maintains that Jesus was the reconciler—dying for our sins, and that he remains alive and dwells in believers. That Jesus takes possession of the inner life of his own, that Christians can say 'Christ lives in me', is not a paradox, but a fact, "a mystery of faith which mocks explanation" ('Christus als Erlöser' p.90). The question which Harnack wishes to pursue is whether Jesus can be said to have died 'for our sins'. He first states the usual objections to such an idea: isn't God love? God didn't require 'satisfaction' in the story of the prodigal son. Did God change from anger to love as a result of Christ's death?

Harnack answers that it is an unbreakable law that the godless and those without peace must either deny God's existence or fear and flee God as the angry Judge. This alienation from God is sin itself, and the hardest punishment of sin. The picture of God as angry and unforgiving is a false one, but it is the natural outcome of the perverse course of action. How can this alienation be overcome; how can the 'buried-alive' sinner be freed from guilt, fear and despair? There is no self-redemption. Redemption always comes through a power (Kraft) that comes from outside, and which brings life to the sinner's 'higher motive-power', the striving after higher goals, which is never completely rooted out. The change, in Harnack's view,



is effected through a change of conviction and a change of experience in which Christ plays the central role:

"When the Holy One condescends to sinners, when He lives and travels with them, when He doesn't count them too trivial to be called his brothers, when He asks nothing of them except that they tolerate his presence among them, when He serves them and dies for them—then they believe again in the Holy because they actually experience it and it melts away, at the same time, their fear of its judgemental strength. They experience that the Holy is mercy, and that there is something more powerful (mächtigeres) than righteousness—almighty Love (allmächtiges Liebe) [ibid. p.92].

It is in this connexion, says Harnack, that we must set the life, word and death of Jesus. This is how it worked and how it still works. He created the conviction that forgiving love is a fact, and that it is the highest revelation of all higher life. This love is greater than punitive righteousness, and this righteousness no longer appears as the last word of the higher life. Whoever believes this, maintains Harnack, is reconciled with God. It is not God who requires reconciliation, but the individual person who must be led back to God. The reconciler is Christ, for he saved humanity from the law of sin by which is it compelled to deny God or fear judgment.

This is not, however, all that Harnack wishes to say about the meaning of Christ's suffering, for history teaches us, he says, that the deepest and most mature Christians held that reconciliation was effected not just through Jesus' word and life's work, but also in his suffering and death. When sinners understand the verdict which righteousness passes, and also see the Holy One suffer and die, how can they not recognise that Jesus suffered what they should have suffered? Before the cross, no other feeling or conviction is possible. Once again Harnack interposes the idea of mystery. He warns that with regard to the cross, the above observations are as far as one ought to go. Any reckoning calculation upon the subject must lead to uncertainty and groundless ideas [see Kaltenborn pp.43, 44]. Awe would fly if we attempted to prove out the laws and means of almighty love. It is simply revealed as fact, and lies on the very edge of what can be grasped with the reason. The cross of Christ, he says, „...ist wie alles Kreuz, das im Dienst der Brüder steht“, and like merciful love itself, it is a holy mystery, hidden from the wise and clever, but still the power and the wisdom of God ['Christus als Erlöser' p.93].

Power themes in 'Christus als Erlöser'

Harnack's description of the process of redemption fits smoothly into his understanding of Christian teaching in terms of power. Though a few other themes emerge in his treatment of redemption elsewhere, basically he conceptualises it in terms of conflict, of bondage and liberation. Underneath the constant struggles in history over social, political and economic power—the wars and the scramble for survival—lies an inner power struggle between belief and unbelief, between spiritual power and its opposition in 'nature' and sin. Humanity fights to be free from the service of transitory things and to build a kingdom of love, and humanity

finds its support for the fight in the Macht of the ethical and holy, that is, in the power of God. Redemption means freedom, the Macht which helps us to lead a pure and holy life and which fills us with the conviction that the struggle, even to the death, is worthwhile. Redemption is presented as an inner power-event. The powerful idea, that the ethical life is not an external 'ought' but the revelation of our true nature and an attainable goal, leads to an empowering of the emotions and will which makes possible the attainment of the ethical life, the life with God. Yet this power is not the product of the individuals within whom it works, but comes in some sense from outside: Harnack insists, despite his description of spiritual power as a support to human endeavour, that there is no self-redemption.

Parts two and three of the argument maintain that, like all divine/spritual power, this power of redemption comes only from God, but reaches humanity through human beings, in some measure through the prophets, but uniquely and primarily through Jesus Christ. Harnack's discussion of the nature and development of the prophet is illustrative of his thinking on divine/spiritual power. The most important step in religious history was taken, he maintains, when people stopped looking for divine power in natural or supra-natural phenomena and sought it in the words and spirit of prophetic individuals. Divine/spiritual power is to be found not in external forces, in nature or in magic, but within personality, and it is not less but more powerful there than when located in sun or storm.

Jesus' uniqueness in comparison with all other prophets is conceived largely, though not exclusively, in terms of a difference in power, that is, in effectiveness. He is the final prophet, the last and most authoritative word, the communicator of the most powerful ideas. His consciousness of God was perfect and complete, and therefore the ideas which made up his message were of greater authority (competent authority) than the partial revelations of his predecessors. His personality and message (charismatic authority) influenced not a small number of people, but many nations and an endless number of generations. And the perfect consistency with which his personality and activity mirrored his ideas lends him unique authority. But Harnack stresses that Jesus' power as redeemer was not limited to the perfection and purity of his revelation of the Father: he died 'for our sins', breaking the power of the 'law of sin', and he still lives and rules, an active power working within the personalities of believers. His life among sinners as the revelation of God creates in them a conviction, born of experience, of God as mercy and forgiving love so emotionally powerful that it breaks through their guilt, fear and despair, frees them and reconciles them to their heavenly Father. His suffering and death are involved in the power struggle: to know one's own guilt and to see the Holy One suffer and die is ineluctably to feel that he died in our place, but beyond this the place of the cross in the power struggle of redemption is a mystery, but still the power and the wisdom of God.

The themes of conflict and liberation in Harnack's understanding of the work of Christ bear resemblances to Gustav Aulén's interpretation of the 'classic' or 'victory' theory of the atonement [in Christus Victor, London, S.P.C.K., 1970: first published 1931]. Aulén describes the 'classic' theory thus:

"...the idea of the Atonement as a Divine conflict and victory; Christ—Christus Victor—fights against and triumphs over the evil powers of the world, the 'tyrants' under which mankind is in bondage and suffering, and in Him God reconciles the world to Himself...In a measure the hostile powers are regarded as in the service of the will of God the Judge of all, and the executants of his judgement. Seen from this side, the triumph over the opposing powers is regarded as a reconciling of God Himself; He is reconciled by the very act in which He reconciles the world to Himself" [ibid. pp. 4-5].

Aulén was himself attempting to develop a form of the classic theory which would be acceptable to modern thought. He complained that the liberals, including Ritschl, unjustly wrote off the theory because of its 'grotesque' and mythological language. Sounding very like Harnack, he complains that this is a criticism merely of the outward form without any attempt to get at the underlying idea [ibid. p.10]. The essentials of this idea he expresses in the concluding paragraphs of the book:

"Let it be added, in conclusion, that if the classic idea of the Atonement ever again resumes a leading place in Christian theology, it is not likely that it will revert to precisely the same forms of expression that it has used in the past...It is the idea itself that will be essentially the same: the fundamental idea of the Atonement as, above all, the movement of God to man, not in the first place of man to God. We shall hear again its tremendous paradoxes: that God, the all-ruler, the Infinite, yet accepts the lowliness of the Incarnation; we shall hear again the old realistic message of the conflict of God with the dark, hostile forces of evil and His victory over them by the Divine self-sacrifice; above all, we shall hear again the note of triumph" [ibid. p.158].

Aulén clearly did not recognise the similarities between the 'classic' theory, when stripped of its mythological language, and Harnack's ideas of redemption, but they are not inconsiderable [see HD I pp.92-94]. Harnack too presents redemption as the victory of Christ over the powers of darkness and evil—those powers interpreted as being bondage to the 'natural' and the finite, sin, guilt, fear and despair. Harnack's ideas represent the conflict not in external, mythological terms but as an existential struggle within the personality. Aulén apparently classed Harnack as another proponent of the 'subjective' theory of the atonement, but the truth is not that simple. Aulén represents the 'subjective' view of the atonement as making atonement dependent upon the individual: it is what the person does which determines salvation. In contrast he writes of the 'classic' theory:

"Wherever there is such a view of the Divine Love, as not called forth by the worthiness or goodness of men, but as bestowing value on men by the very fact that they are loved by God, the work of the Divine forgiveness always appears as prior to ethical regeneration, not dependent upon or proportioned to human repentance or any other conditions on man's side. It is this primacy of the Divine Love which is the basis of the classic idea of the Atonement as God's own work" [Aulén, pp.139-140].

Harnack's view can be recognised not in what Aulén here rejects, but in what he endorses. He maintains, in spite of his insistence that the arena of redemption is the individual consciousness, just this emphasis upon redemption being the work of God and not of humanity, the reaching out of God to sinners and bestowing value upon them by loving them. Aulén's quotation accords in tone very closely with the passage from 'Christus als Erlöser' quoted above describing Christ as the Holy One condescending to sinners, living and travelling with them and leading them to believe once again in the Holy ['Christus als Erlöser' p.92].

Aulén describes as standard features of the classic theory, 1) primary and continuous divine activity, 2) a close connexion between the atonement and the incarnation, 3) emphasis on Christ's deity, that is, no idea of Christ offering God a sacrifice as a man only, 4) a dualistic and dramatic presentation, 5) the 'note of triumph' [Aulén, pp.107f]. Harnack's ideas have considerable points of contact:

1. The initiative and effective power in redemption is God's: Harnack insists repeatedly that there is no self-redemption.

2-3. The atonement and the incarnation are intimately connected in Harnack. Jesus' suffering and death are not seen as having redemptive value to the exclusion of his life and teaching—all of Christ's work on earth, and his resurrection as well, are presented as part of his redemptive work. Jesus' humanity is absolutely essential to his redemptive activity, for it is only from one personality to another that, within the iron ring, the divine/spiritual power can be spread. As we have seen, Harnack rejects the traditional two-nature Christology and so the act of incarnation itself receives little emphasis, but the fact of incarnation, the assertion that in Christ the divine appeared in as pure a form as it can on earth [WC? p.146/DW p.92], is fundamental to Harnack's soteriology.

4-5. The dualistic and dramatic element, and the note of triumph, are characteristic of Harnack's presentation of redemption—the struggle with the dark forces of sin and finitude and the victory of Christ which makes us joyful children of God.

A further, perhaps less satisfactory, similarity lies in the inability of either scholar to attain rational clarity for the presentation of the theory. Every attempt, says Aulén, to force the classic theory into a rational scheme is bound to fail [Aulén, p.155], and he criticises the idea that the Christian faith must be expressed in rational doctrine [ibid. p.9]. This accords with Harnack's use of the category of 'holy mystery'.

Where Harnack and the classic theory part company is over the idea of the wrath of God. According to Aulén, the classic theory holds that God's wrath is a 'tyrant', like death and the devil, and there is conflict within God between love and wrath, though love is affirmed to be God's inmost nature [ibid. p.114]. The hostile powers are seen as being in part in the service of God, executing judgment, and Christ's victory is a reconciliation of God with God, while at the same time effecting God's reconciliation with the world [ibid. pp.4-5]. Harnack will not allow that God needs to be reconciled or that God's attitude to humanity changes because of the work of Christ. With Ritschl he sees the concept of God as wrathful judge as a

false one which it is the work of Christ's redemption to overcome [ibid. p.138]. Where the classic idea has the alienation being on God's part—God's anger at sin—Harnack sees the alienation as being solely on our part. Yet even here there is a parallel between the two theories, for where the classic theory talks of the evil powers as being in part the executants of God's judgment, Harnack speaks of a 'law of sin', 'that unnatural law of nature', whereby a sinner is forced to either deny God or flee God in fear and guilt. The sinner indeed experiences evil and suffering, and Harnack speaks in Dogmengeschichte of 'wrath' and 'penalty' being real, but they are the result, it appears, not of the character or emotions of God, but of the impersonal, quasi-natural 'law' whereby the subjective experience of guilt and judgment are a direct consequence of the act of sin itself. Thus Harnack attempts to safeguard the wholly loving character of God while at the same time doing justice to subjective experience of guilt and judgment.

It is possible to view Harnack's ideas of redemption as a psychologised and demythologised version of the classic theory of the atonement. Aulén, in attempting to describe the difference between the subjective and the classic theories of the atonement, maintains that the classical, unlike the subjective theory, is not set forth as only or mainly a change taking place in humanity, but "...describes a complete change in the situation, a change in the relation between God and the world, and a change also in God's own attitude" [ibid. p.6]. Harnack would hold, with the subjective theory, that the change is not in God's attitude, and that redemption is a change which takes place within the personality, but that this constitutes a real and complete change in the situation, and one which is effected from outside the individual. Redemption happens through the loving power of almighty God mediated through Jesus Christ.

iii. Insights from Dogmengeschichte

The topical treatment of redemption in 'Christus als Erlöser' requires verification and some supplementation from Harnack's longer historical works. One of the most detailed discussions of the atonement occurs in division two of Dogmengeschichte, developing through Harnack's description of Logos christology after Chalcedon, and of Augustine, Anselm and the Reformation. The key section is that devoted to Anselm. As the story unfolds, one becomes aware of a tension in Harnack's thought between his emphasis on the personal, relational nature of divine/spiritual power and his radical, 'realistic' conception of the power of sin.

Augustine

Harnack praises Athanasius for correcting Logos christology in the direction of a concern for redemption, while noting that atonement was not in fact central to his conception of redemption [HD III pp.140-141, 164-165, 271-272; IV p.29 n.3]. Redemption also forms the central theme in Harnack's treatment of Augustine, and at a psychological, existential level, but there are in Harnack's opinion still problems, for Augustine's better

insights were confused and restrained by his adherence to official church dogma, and by his allegiance to neoplatonism.

Augustine's great contribution according to Harnack concerned God and the soul, " ...to show what God is, and what salvation the soul requires" [HD V p.10]. He could not, however, connect, at a theoretical level, God, the work of Christ, and salvation. His system of doctrine and his impassioned love for God were not clearly connected in theory with Christ's work and death [ibid.]. It was not until the time of Bernard and Francis that Augustinianism was able to grasp that: "...impassioned love to the Eternal and Holy One found its object in the Crucified..." and that "...the most profound of thoughts had dawned upon it, that the suffering of the innocent was salvation in history," [ibid.].

Harnack identifies a parallel lack of connexion in Augustine, between the christological emphases of Augustine the church dogmatist and Augustine the man of living piety. The latter, Harnack holds, is the man at his truest and best. Through his piety Augustine knew the true nature of Jesus—strength made perfect in weakness, what is great and good always appearing in a lowly state and by the power of the contrast triumphing over pride [HD V pp.132-133]. He was unable, however, to reduce this christology to a dogmatic formula [HD V pp.133-134]. Augustine held by the old formulae because they were part of tradition and expressed the uniqueness of Christ, but his true foundation, insists Harnack, was the Christ who "...has broken down his own pride, and had given him the power to find God in lowliness and apprehend him in humility..." [ibid.].

Christ's expiatory work did, however, come to the fore via the development of the system of penance, both in Ambrose and Augustine and afterwards, and there not the incarnation but the death of Christ was the main issue. The accent was on Christ's human nature: Jesus the mediator was looked on as the man whose voluntary achievement possessed an infinite value by the special dispensation of God [HD V p.54].

A further complication with regard to Augustine concerned grace. Harnack held that Augustine was the first to establish the mistaken idea that grace had an objective character. Such a view diverted believers from Christ himself to his merit, i.e. what he had gained for them. His doctrine of grace was relatively independent of the historical Christ, and he ran the risk of neutralising Jesus' general significance by teaching that his work referred to and exhausted itself in the forgiveness of sins, which did not indeed yield all that a Christian needs for salvation. This independence of grace from Christ persisted in the church. Luther, setting out from Augustinianism, did overcome it, to think of God, and grace, only as he knew them in Christ [HD V p.86; see also ch. 5 pp.127f].

Anselm

Harnack's discussion of Anselm, and the short following section on Abelard, forms the heart of his treatment of redemption. One must of course question whether Harnack's understanding of Anselm was correct, and there is evidence to suggest that it contains distortions. But ultimately our concern is with Harnack's own theology, and the view of Anselm which he

presents becomes at many points a foil against which to present his own convictions.

Anselm was, according to Harnack, the first theologian to formulate a clear doctrine of the saving work of Christ, and he did this by employing the principles of the practice of penance [HD VI p.56]. His work was a reconstruction of the whole of dogma from the viewpoint of sin and redemption, a viewpoint which, Harnack notes, theologians today, including evangelicals, still consider valid [HD VI p.67]. Harnack praises Anselm for at last effecting the separation of grace from nature and its relocation in history, with redemption coming through the historical person of Christ, through his life and death, as opposed to the Logos [HD VI pp.69-70, 73-74]. Praise is also due for his emphasis on the humanity of Christ and on the moral necessity of Christ's death, with guilt rather than the consequences of sin (i.e. death) being at the heart of the matter [ibid.].

Harnack frames four major criticisms of Anselm's theory, which reflect his own positive convictions:

1. The humanity of Christ is still not taken seriously enough: his death, as a sacrificial act, obscures his life and personality [HD VI p.78].
2. The theory provides for only the possibility of salvation: only 'the feeble thought of example' remains, which does not have the power to 'incite earnest imitation'. There is here no assurance, and no real redemption for the individual. To get to a real redemption, Anselm had to go beyond his own theory [HD VI pp.68-72, 76-78].
3. No 'penalty' is involved, and thus the gravity of sin is not taken seriously enough in spite of Anselm's attempts to do so:

"With every effort to express it as strongly as possible, the gravity of sin (pondus peccati) is not treated with sufficient earnestness if the thought of penalty, and therefore also of vicarious penal suffering, is entirely eliminated. In the idea that sin can be compensated for by something else than penalty there lies an underestimate of its gravity that is extremely objectionable. A recognition of the deep proposition that the innocent suffers for the guilty, that the penalty lies upon him, that we might have peace, is not to be found in the Anselmic theory..." [HD VI p.70].

Harnack insists that while Anselm rightly apprehends that sin is primarily guilt before God, he wrongly equates this guilt not with a lack of trust, but with personal injury. He comments: "How anyone pleases to deal with personal injuries is a matter for himself; on the other hand, the guilt which is want of child-like fear and love, and which destroys God's world, must be wiped out, whether it be in wrath or in love. Anselm fails to see that" [HD VI p.74]. Thus, while describing the nature of sin in psychological rather than juridical terms, Harnack has no wish to minimize its seriousness. It is not a personal, interior-moral matter only, for it destroys God's world. In What is Christianity?, Harnack similarly reminds us that Jesus, "...knows of a power which he thinks still worse than want and misery, namely sin; and he knows of a force still more emancipating than mercy, namely, forgiveness" [WC? p.94].

4. The theory outrages the character of God, as to God's justice, goodness and unity:

"...the mythological conception of God as the mighty private man, who is incensed at the injury done to His honour and does not forego His wrath till He has received an at least adequately great equivalent; the quite Gnostic antagonism between justice and goodness, the Father being the just one, and the Son the good; the frightful idea...*that mankind are delivered from the wrathful God..the dreadful thought that God is superior to man, as having the prerogative of not being able to forgive from love, a payment always being needed by Him...*" [HD VI pp.76-78; see also pp.60f, 72, 73].

Harnack adds in a footnote that such conclusions about God can only be explained by the fact that the thought of God as the Father who is nigh us had fallen into the background in the Middle Ages, and the old view of the Trinity as unity was no longer held [HD VI p.76 n.1]. The paragraph quoted above, which insists that Anselm erred in removing the idea of penalty for sin, seems to be at variance with Harnack's horror of the idea of a God who could not forgive from love but required payment. The key to understanding this as something other than a contradiction lies in the words 'a payment demanded by Him'. In Harnack's view 'penalty' is not a payment to God for God's sake: it arises rather out of sin as an inevitable consequence similar to a natural law. Harnack notes with interest the thought, occasionally present in Anselm, that God cannot simply pardon humanity for humanity's own sake—because those polluted by sin would not be as they were before the Fall even if admitted to paradise. Harnack sees this as an important turn of thought in Anselm, and regrets that it was not further developed [HD VI p.72]. He also insists that Anselm's theory is not a doctrine of reconciliation, for it does not explain how the opposition of will between God and sinful humanity is removed [HD VI p.68f].

Abelard

Harnack's treatment of Abelard is much briefer than that of Anselm, but it is clear that in many ways he feels that Abelard offers an advance. While criticising him for not taking penalty and the gravity of sin more seriously (he "...did not perceive that the sinner cannot be otherwise delivered from guilt than by experiencing and seeing the penalty of guilt" [HD VI p.80]), and thus not adequately appreciating the cost of love [see Meijering (1978) p.45], Harnack praises him for his love-centredness with regard to the atonement, and his use of relational and psychological rather than objective concepts to express it. Christ's merit is his service of love, which characterised his whole life and not only his death: love calls forth responsive love in us, and in this interchange of love is found the forgiveness of sins [HD VI pp.78-79]. Harnack defends both Abelard and himself from criticisms about a 'psychological' approach, and in the process sheds much light on what he means by penalty:

"...the word 'psychological' is here meant to create an impression of the profane, but we have surely only the choice between this and the physico-chemical...Is it not the *penalty for man* that as a sinner he *must* think of a God of terror, and can anything greater take place in

heaven or earth than when a man's feelings are revolutionised, i.e., when his fear of a God of terror is transformed into trust and love? If it were possible to bring home to the sinner the thought of the loving God, in whom he can have confidence, while he feels himself guilty, then certainly Christ would have died in vain; but that is a *contradictio in adjecto*" [HD VI p.80 n.1].

The Reformation

Harnack's treatment of the reformation is problematic in several ways. The first concerns the accuracy of the image of catholic piety which serves as the foil for Luther. The second concerns Harnack's choice to present Luther and only Luther as the exemplar of the reformation [HD VII p.25 n.2, p.268 n.11]. The third concerns the accuracy of his portrait of Luther, given Harnack's conscious choice, for his evaluation, of that which in Luther was unique to the exclusion of that in him which was characteristic of his time. For our purposes, however, these questions are of secondary interest: we look at Harnack's Luther in order to know Harnack. Here his major christological themes find clear expression, if not the denouement one might have expected after the eloquence and passion of his discussion of Anselm.

In Harnack's view the pre-reformation upsurge in individualism and piety forced the question of the *certitudo salutis* to the centre of ecclesiastical life and politics [HD VI pp.84f, 99]. Related to the question of assurance was the question of knowledge, i.e. where true knowledge of God was to be found. Both questions find their answer in the historical Christ. God can be known only from personal life, and in a way that awakens conviction, only from the personal life of Christ. To know him is to know his redemptive activity [HD VI p.181, VII pp.195, 197, 199, 210f].

Harnack maintains that in Luther the objective categories of sin and holiness are transformed into the relational ones of guilt and forgiveness. Jesus, by his life and death, suffered wrath and penalty for us, reconciling us with the Father. In this we come to understand the humility of God, who is so little and lowly that we can lay hold of him and enclose him in our hearts [HD VII pp.198-200]. It is also possible to conceive of Luther's difference with the ancient church over assurance of salvation in power terms: for the latter, the revelation in Christ was the precondition of actual salvation; for the former, Harnack says, it was 'the sole efficient factor'. The question here is, 'where does the power come from to effect actual redemption in personal life?' Luther's answer is that the power is all God's from beginning to end [HD VII p.229].

iv. Strength made perfect in weakness: Harnack's *theologia crucis*

Kaltenborn presents Harnack as a representative of *theologia gloriae* with no *theologia crucis* [Kaltenborn, pp.42, 45]. He portrays his thought as a kind of optimistic triumphalism: religion is a super-concept which finally subsumes everything—there is no possibility of atheism. There is one reality for the world, and it is an optimistic one: 'Humanity works in history as if God existed' [ibid. pp.125-126]. With this Kaltenborn contrasts the sharp *theologia crucis* to which Bonhoeffer came in prison: 'We live in the world, and God indeed so leads us to live, as if God did

not exist'. The God who is with us is also the God who forsakes us. God went to the cross, and is weak in the world, and only so is he by us and helps us. Kaltenborn notes that Bonhoeffer's theologia crucis did not lead him to a pessimistic world-view, and that this is probably the result of Harnack's influence [ibid]. What he seems unable to recognise is the theologia crucis theme which is clearly present in Harnack in spite of his wholehearted optimism, and which forms a central theme in his teaching with regard to the atonement. For Harnack also, God is a humble God, 'so little and lowly that we can lay hold of him and enclose him in our hearts'. Sykes refers to Harnack's theme of strength in weakness, of the humility and suffering of God in Christ, as a 'hidden theologia crucis' [private communication, 1988]; I would describe it as the perennial minor key in Harnack which balances and gives depth to his optimism. Strength made perfect in weakness is the power paradox which Harnack sees as central to the Christian message. In explicit terms it is largely absent from 'Christus als Erlöser', but we find it repeatedly in the major books. In describing Jesus in Das Wesen Harnack contrasts two kinds of power:

□ ...'strength is made perfect in weakness'. That there is a divine strength (göttliche Kraft) and glory which stands in no need of earthly power (Macht) and earthly splendour, nay excludes them; that there is a majesty of holiness and love which saves and blesses those upon whom it lays hold, was what he knew who in spite of his lowliness called himself the messiah, and the same must have been felt by those who recognised him as the king of Israel anointed by God" [WC? p.138/DW p.88].

Harnack's discussion of the manner in which Christ's death was conceived as an expiatory sacrifice also illustrates the value in his eyes of lowly suffering. Of the various interpretations suggested by Jesus' death, says Harnack, the idea that injustice and sin deserve to be punished, and that the suffering of a just man makes atonement for and purifies us was the most powerful [WC? p.159]. The concept of blood-sacrifice is a deep-seated religious idea, common to many nations, and Christ's death clearly: "...had the value of an expiatory sacrifice, for otherwise it would not have had strength to penetrate into that inner world in which blood-sacrifices originated, but it was not a sacrifice in the same sense as the others, or else it could not have put an end to them" [WC? pp.157-158].

In Dogmengeschichte Harnack describes how the monastic revival and the crusades reawakened a keen interest in the historical Jesus, the Christ of the gospels, who took his place alongside the Christ of dogma and sacrament. Christ-mysticism flourished, with a deep veneration for his sufferings, for his majesty in humility, innocence in penal suffering, life in death, the combined spectacle of suffering and glory in 'Ecce homo'. Harnack comments that this piety at its best: "...is the simple expression...of the Christian religion itself; for in reverence for the suffering Christ, and in the power which proceeds from his image, all the forces of religion are embraced" [HD VI p.9]. This is a liberating message: "...that the divine is to be found in humility and in patient suffering, and that the innocent suffers that the guilty may have peace" [ibid].

This is the paradox of power through powerlessness which forms a repeated theme in Harnack's christological writing. A key phrase for understanding

Harnack's view of the atonement is: " ...the most profound of thoughts...that the suffering of the innocent was salvation in history" [HD V p.10].

In Mission and Expansion Harnack describes the impact of Jesus upon the lives of the first Christians under the metaphor of the 'wounded healer'. He first of all says that Jesus appeared among his people as a physician, healing illness of body and soul, both of which are expressive of the supreme ailment of humanity which is sin:

"...In this way he won men and women to be his disciples...They were healed because they had believed on him, i.e. because they had gained health from his character and words. To know God meant a sound soul. This was the rock on which Jesus had rescued them from the shipwreck of their life. They knew they were healed, just because they had recognised God as the Father in his Son" [M&E I p.101].

Yet, Harnack continues, the physician it seems could not help himself. Persecuted, he went to the cross:

"...But even the cross only displayed for the first time the full depth and energy of his saving power. It put the keystone on his mission, by showing men that *the sufferings of the just are the saving force in human history*. 'Surely he hath borne our sickness and carried our sorrow; by his stripes we are healed'. This was the new truth that issued from the cross of Jesus. It flowed out, like a stream of fresh water, on the arid souls of men and on their dry morality. The morality of outward acts and regulations gave way to the conception of a life which was personal, pure, and divine, which spent itself in the service of the brethren, and gave itself up ungrudgingly to death. This conception was the new principle of life. It uprooted the old life swaying to and fro between sin and virtue...The disciples went forth to preach the tidings of 'God the Saviour', of that Saviour and physician whose person, deeds and sufferings were man's salvation..." [M&E I pp.102-103; see also *ibid.* pp.104f, 109 n.4,].

In another passage from Mission and Expansion we see how Harnack combined his 'victory' and 'strength in weakness' themes. He says that an important element in Christianity as the religion of the Spirit and power was its regard for the lowly, for sorrow, suffering and death, and its triumphant victory over these contradictions of human life, exemplified in the Redeemer's life and cross:

"...Blent with patience and hope, this reverence overcame any external hindrance; it recognised in suffering the path to deity, and thus triumphed in the midst of all its foes...Here lies the root of the most profound factor contributed by Christianity to the development of the moral sense, and contributed with perfect strength and delicacy..." [M&E I pp.217-218].

Harnack notes that this mood had its negative side, being corrupted into an aesthetic of death, agony and raptures over suffering, or trivialised by custom and common talk. But, he holds, however much we may deplore its corruption: " ...we should never forget that it represented the shadow

thrown by the most profound and at the same time most heroic mood of the human soul in its spiritual exaltation; it is, in fact, religion itself, fully ripe" [ibid. p.218].

Harnack appears to present 'strength made perfect in weakness' as something of a universal law of the spirit. He describes the cross as presenting this 'new truth', perhaps moving humanity to a higher plane of moral development, but often it appears that rather than creating a new situation, the cross is the supreme revelation and example of an eternal truth. This would be on a par with his insistence that redemption comes when sinful alienated human beings can accept the eternal truth of God's fatherly love. However, the themes of penalty and Harnack's insistence that reconciliation of the opposed wills of God and humanity is needed suggest that redemption comes not only through revelation and acceptance of the eternal status quo, but also through the specific action of Jesus. There is more than a little ambivalence on this subject in Harnack's writing.

4.d. Summary and further observations

What understanding of Jesus Christ emerges from Harnack's historical analysis? When he expresses his own opinion on this subject, what does he say? To the speculative christology of the Logos Harnack opposes the figure of the historical Jesus, i.e. the Christ of the gospels. The authentic western form, which eventually rendered the official church christology a mere formula, corresponds to the clearest passages of the New Testament and is simply this, that Christ was the object of the Father's grace, carried out the work which the Father entrusted to him, and by the Father was exalted. To the question 'was Jesus divine?' Harnack would answer in the affirmative but on his own terms: in Jesus the divine appeared in as pure a form as it can on earth. This revelation of God in humanity is the human individuality of Jesus in its simple loftiness, its heart-winning love, and its holy earnestness. Harnack is happy to note that via the monastic revival and the crusades the historical Christ took his place beside the Christ of dogma and sacrament—the Christ who embodied majesty in humility, innocence in penal suffering, life in death, suffering in glory. This piety at its best 'is the simple expression of the Christian religion itself: for in reverence for the suffering Christ, and in the power which proceeds from his image, all the forces of religion are embraced'. Jesus teaches us that 'the divine is to be found in humility and in patient suffering' and we see the truth that 'the suffering of the innocent was salvation in history'.

Through his 'editorial comment' as Harnack reviews the centuries of soteriological thought we learn much about his own view. In Athanasius and Augustine he observes redemption becoming the centre of theological thought. Augustine's warm piety represents that redemption in psychological, existential terms, and recognises the true Jesus, whose divine strength and glory appear in lowliness and weakness. Harnack welcomes Augustine's emphasis on the humanity of Jesus the mediator, and, in contrast to Augustine, asserts the personal rather than objective nature of grace. Anselm is praised for integrating the redemptive significance of Jesus' life and death, for stressing Jesus' humanity and the moral necessity of his death. Partly in agreement with and partly in contrast to

Anselm, Harnack develops his idea of the gravity of sin and the importance of penalty, noting that penalty is necessary, but not as a payment to God. The idea is suggested that it is necessary for humanity's own sake. Abelard's contribution is seen as his psychological, relational approach and his understanding of Christ's death as showing us the cost of love. With the reformation comes a further understanding of the relational rather than objective nature of redemption, the important category of assurance of salvation, and a vivid psychological description, in the experience of Luther, of the redemptive process from the point of view of the believer, along with an insistence on salvation being entirely initiated and sustained by God.

Harnack expresses Luther's spiritual experience in power terms which by now are familiar to us. Faith is 'living assurance of the living God', unwavering trust in the God of grace: we have confidence, certainty and assurance of salvation because in his redemptive work Christ 'undertakes our cause'. Faith is a vigorous laying hold, by the individual, of God in Christ, which creates stability, firmness, joy, transformation and renewal, and gives the individual dominion over the world. It is in this context, the triumph of divine/spiritual power over nature/necessity/the world, that Harnack places Luther's doctrine of 'the freedom of a Christian man'. This freedom was no empty emancipation or licence for every kind of subjectivity: "...for him freedom was dominion over the world, in the assurance that if God be for us, no one can be against us, "[HHD VII pp.185-186]. It was a freedom inwardly bound by the duty of trusting God courageously and of serving one's neighbour [ibid.]. Luther in his 'unfree will' found the freedom and courage to defy the entire world, and Harnack asserts that the freedom of the individual which protestantism champions has its root here: " ...The Christian is through his God an independent being, who is in need of nothing, and neither stands under bondage to laws nor is in dependence on men" [HHD VII p.212]. He is under no priest, and is a king over the world [ibid.]. By admitting his powerlessness ('with force of arms we nothing can') Luther found power ('freedom and force'). Here is divine/spiritual power—rooted in the historical Christ and in the ability of his personal life to transform life, rooted in certainty and in one strong, simple, profound concept of God.

We have seen that Harnack's christology is overwhelmingly a redemption-centred christology, and is dominated by the following insights:

-The redemption Christ brings is not an abrogation of being human, i.e. not, as in Greek ideas, an ontological transformation from created nature to divinity.

-Redemption as the supreme good cannot be separated from the morally good: the chasm which separates God and humanity is not fundamentally of nature but of will.

-Redemption/salvation is for this present life and not just in a preliminary way—i.e. the concern is not solely with the hereafter.

-Atonement, via penal suffering, is central to redemption. The redemption in Christ provides more than a precondition and an example, for we do not have the power in ourselves for obedience and imitation. It is, rather, a

real redemption, through vicarious penal suffering; this innocent suffering is an act of power, with the effect of wiping out the guilt (radical mistrust) which is destroying God's world. The action is all God's: but our acceptance of it brings assurance, comfort to the distressed conscience, and empowers us to lead the life of love in imitation of Christ for which we longed but were powerless to attain [HD VI pp.70, 71f]. Sin and its guilt must be dealt with, not for God's sake but for ours: they are powerful destructive forces, which can only be neutralised by the strange majestic law of the power of innocent suffering.

Harnack's christology, for all its merits, raises several serious questions. In the first place, how does he reconcile his insistence on the uniqueness and particularity of the historical Jesus with his presentation of Christianity as the universal, absolute religion which has been true from all eternity? This would pose no particularly great problem if Harnack believed in Jesus' pre-existence, but in rejecting this route he is left with something of a problem. The second question arises from the first, and asks whether Jesus is definitive of truth in a causal sense, or whether he is simply the supreme illustration of universal truth. A third question which remains is to what extent Harnack actually manages to find a place for the cross in his understanding of redemption. The fourth question asks whether Harnack's employment of the category of 'holy mystery' does not blunt his apologetic effectiveness and theological clarity.

What is clear in spite of these tensions and ambiguities is that, in Harnack's christology, atonement and redemption are power terms. Whether convincingly to reveal an eternal condition, or to effect a change in condition, power was required. Why was a death needed, and the death of this man? To release power: 'the suffering of the innocent is salvation in history'. How is power, the power to live as a new creation, released by his death? 'What is great and good always appears in a lowly state and by the power of the contrast triumphs over pride'. Pride is another manner of conceiving the problem—the pride which cannot trust in a child-like way. The power of God becomes accessible to us when we find the courage to trust. Our resources of courage and conviction lie in the powerful personality of Christ. Is it just awakening conviction in us which is the power-event which shifts us from the kingdom of sin and futility to the kingdom of God? It seems not. There is penalty inherent in our lack of trust, which Christ by his 'imperishable service', his suffering and death, 'pays'. Yet Anselmic categories do not hold, for the wrath and terror and the judgment are ultimately within me: 'is it not the penalty for man that as a sinner he must think of a God of terror...?' Christ lived, suffered and died because there was no other way 'to bring home to the sinner the thought of a loving God'. In this bringing-home, a redemptive inner power-event of incalculable proportions takes place, and thus Christ in his weakness becomes the power of God. The fatherhood of God as revealed in Christ also partakes of the power paradox of strength through weakness. Instead of a domineering God exercising power upon us, Harnack's view of the gospel reveals the empowering God who liberates us at great cost.

CHAPTER FIVE: MISUNDERSTANDING DIVINE POWER: MIRACLES, ESCHATOLOGY,
SACRAMENTS

5.a. Introduction

The third question which is to be put to Harnack is, 'Given the iron ring and the improbability of the mythological view of divine/spiritual power, how does one account for miracles, for supernatural events, and for millenarian enthusiasm, and how does one understand the meaning of sacrament?' Miracles and prophecy were the traditional proofs of divine power in the Christian revelation, and therefore they form a subject which any reinterpretation of that power must address. Sacraments may not at first glance appear to fit in the same category as miracles and eschatology, but Harnack's treatment, which focusses on the catholic idea of the sacraments as vehicles of a miraculous, objective grace, makes it appropriate to group the subjects together. As one might expect from his epistemology of the iron ring, there can be little room in Harnack's system for these very external expressions of divine activity. He does not, however, make categorical pronouncements or consign all miracle-stories to the realm of mythology, and by various routes manages to allow the integrity of at least some of the historical sources which include reports of supernatural occurrences. Harnack's dilemma here is that his epistemology precludes the miraculous, but as an early church historian he finds that his texts are full of it, and in order to respect their integrity he must take it seriously. In order to satisfy the claims of both history and epistemology it is necessary for Harnack to explain the phenomena without explaining them away, and in order to do so he adopts several strategies. The chief of these is to represent miracles, eschatological convictions, and sacraments understood as a means of objective grace as misunderstandings, as erroneous externalisations of internal, divine/spiritual power, or occasionally as the effects in the natural world caused by internal divine/spiritual power [WC? p.28/DW p.19]. At points, as we shall see, Harnack's treatment is plainly reductionist, but more often his approach is inductive, tracing back the unlikely tale of the supernatural to the fresh, vivid, spiritual experience which came to be expressed in a miraculous or supernatural form.

There is ambivalence in Harnack's examination of ecstasy and enthusiasm, miracles and eschatology, for while he wishes to explain these manifestations of 'the Spirit' in the early church as either natural events rooted in human psychology or as mistaken externalisations of inner experience, he desires strongly to endorse the spiritual force, freshness and power which were demonstrated by the early church under the power of 'the Spirit'. He wishes to deny that miracles, in the sense of mighty external power-events intervening in the order of nature, take place, yet he wants to affirm the 'miraculousness' of the corresponding inner experience of Christians, the sense of divine empowering which enables them to meet life serenely and courageously:

°...We are firmly convinced that what happens in space and time is subject to the general laws of motion, and that in this sense, as an

interruption of the order of Nature, there can be no such things as 'miracles'. But we also recognise that the religious man—if religion really permeates him and is something more than a belief in the religion of others—is certain that he is not shut up within a blind and brutal course of Nature, but that this course of Nature serves higher ends, or, as it may be, that some inner and divine power can help us so to encounter it as that 'everything must necessarily be for the best'. This experience, which I might express in one word as the ability to escape from the power and service of transitory things, is always felt afresh to be a miracle each time that it occurs...How clearly and logically, then, must a religious man think, if, in spite of this experience, he holds firmly to the inviolable character of what happens in space and time. Who can wonder that even great minds fail to keep the two spheres quite separate? And as we all live, first and foremost, in the domain not of ideas but of perceptions, and in a language of metaphor, how can we avoid conceiving that which is divine and makes us free as a mighty power working upon the order of Nature, and breaking through or arresting it? This notion, though it belong only to the realm of fantasy and metaphor, will, it seems, last as long as religion itself" [WC? pp.26-27].

Harnack closes his discussion on miracles by insisting that the question of miracles is of relative indifference in comparison to everything else which is to be found in the gospels:

"...It is not miracles that matter; the question on which everything turns is whether we are helplessly yoked to an inexorable necessity, or whether a God exists who rules and governs, and whose power to compel Nature we can move by prayer and make a part of our experience" [WC? p.30].

There appears to be a contradiction between the two-statements. God possesses the power to compel nature, which power we can move by prayer, and yet the order of nature is not and cannot be broken. The cause of the contradiction may lie simply in carelessness of speech in the lecture-hall, or it may be that the resolution may be found in the expression 'move by prayer and make a part of our experience', i.e. that the power which is moved by prayer is not directly over nature, but over how we encounter it. Harnack himself appears to be tripping over the language of metaphor. In any event, the opinion expressed in the first quotation may be safely taken to be Harnack's characteristic position, though the contradiction hints at a persistent ambivalence in Harnack, perhaps an unwillingness, in spite of his epistemological convictions, to quite let go of the supernatural interpretation of Christianity.

This opinion, and the ambivalence, is confirmed by reference to a lengthy footnote on the subject in Dogmengeschichte. The historian cannot, he says, regard a miracle as a sure, given, historical event because to do so destroys the mode of consideration on which all historical investigation rests. He adds:

²...But should the historian, notwithstanding, be convinced that Jesus Christ did extraordinary things, in the strict sense miraculous things, then, from the unique impression he has obtained of this person, he infers the possession by him of supernatural power. This conclusion itself belongs to the province of religious faith: though there has seldom been a strong faith which has not drawn it " [HD I p.65 n.3].

As noted above, Harnack is careful to place the whole question of miracles in a position of secondary importance. While insisting that the healing miracles at any rate cannot be cut from the historical accounts without destroying the accounts themselves [ibid.], he insists that Jesus himself downplayed the significance of these things [WC? pp.28-29]. He refuses to base the importance of Jesus upon these 'signs and wonders', holding them to be unfit, after 1800 years, to secure any special status for Jesus unless it were already established by other means. The other, and correct, means for establishing Jesus' importance he expresses thus:

²...That he could do with himself what he would, that he created a new thing without overturning the old, that he won men to himself by announcing the Father, that he inspired without fanaticism, set up a kingdom without politics, set men free from the world without asceticism, was a teacher without theology, at a time of fanaticism and politics, asceticism and theology, is the great miracle of his person, and that he who preached the Sermon on the Mount declared himself, in respect of his life and death, to be the redeemer and Judge of the world, is the offence and foolishness which mock all reason" [HD I p.65 n.3].

Jesus' significance lies not in his wonder-working, but in the 'inner miracle' of his personality and achievements. Similarly Christian character was to show itself less in signs and wonders than in the ordinary circumstances of human life [WC? p.171]. Harnack insists that one cannot escape the claims of the gospel with the excuse that miracles are impossible, for the underlying truth to which they point remains: "In spite of these stories, nay in part even in them, we are presented with a reality which has claims upon our participation [WC? p.28/DW p.19].

5.b. Ecstasy, enthusiasm and miracles in the early church

In Das Wesen, Harnack explains the religious enthusiasm of the early church in natural rather than supernatural terms, as an explosion of the elementary forces of the religious temperament which had been long held in check by rigid dogma and ritual, and which were set free through the Christian preaching. These forces: "...showed themselves in ecstatic phenomena, in signs and wonders, in an enhancement of all the functions of life, down to conditions of a pathological and suspicious character" [WC? p.166]. Fortunately Christianity demonstrated its goodness and greatness

by subordinating all states of ecstasy to the spiritual purport and moral discipline (Zucht) of the faith [WC? pp.166-167]. There were plenty of marvels, but the gospel: " ...was no less effective in heightening the religious and moral powers, which operate with such purity and power in certain individuals that they bear palpably the stamp of their divine origin" [M&E I p.201]. It was a proof of the inwardness and moral power of the new message that in spite of the enthusiasm generated by the personal experience of religion, there were relatively few extravagant or violent movements to be combatted, and that Paul, who in no way sought to quench 'the Spirit', could be stern in his correction when the situation got out of hand [WC? pp.170-171]. "Where," Harnack asks, "have we another example in history of a religion intervening with such a robust supernatural consciousness, and at the same time laying the moral foundations of the earthly life of the community so firmly as this message?" [WC? p.171].

The treatment in Dogmengeschichte brings to expression somewhat more clearly Harnack's positive attitudes towards enthusiastic phenomena. One may see the whole transpotentiation theme which governs Dogmengeschichte as a lament for the passing of vital, enthusiastic faith. In a passage on the alteration in the church by the year 200 which was clearly the prototype for the famous version in Das Wesen quoted in l.c. above [HD I pp.45-46], Harnack favours the original, enthusiastic form. What is commended is 'enthusiastic, independent Christians', 'the living faith', 'surrender to Christ', 'the Holy Church', 'the glowing hope of the kingdom of heaven', 'prophecy', 'the bearers of the Spirit', 'miracles and healings', 'fervent prayers', 'renunciation of the world', 'the Spirit' [ibid]. Harnack also indicates the positive value of the eschatological element, saying that it continues to surface and guard Christianity against secularisation [HD I pp.129-130]. Indeed he virtually champions Montanism as a 'last stand' of the old enthusiasm against the corrosive forces of advancing catholicism with its secondary, derivative, 'reflective piety' [HD II pp.94f].

These positive statements must be set beside Harnack's firm conviction that miracles, as such, do not happen and are largely the result of a mistaken externalising of inner spiritual events. He clearly longs, at a constructive-theological level, to recapture and retain the freshness of early Christianity while separating it from and leaving aside its miraculous and enthusiastic forms. He is enabled to do this by his assumption that, in rather the same way there is a double gospel in early Christianity, so there is operative in the New Testament a dual conception of the Spirit. On the one hand it comes upon the believer fitfully, is expressed in visible signs, deprives people of self-consciousness and puts them beside themselves. It is the spirit of ecstasy and miracle. On the other hand 'the Spirit' is the constant possession of the believer, which operates by enlightening the conscience and strengthening the character, whose fruits are love, joy, peace, etc. It is the spirit of sonship. Paul, according to Harnack, taught Christians to value the second conception more, but he was not perfectly clear. As yet, 'Spirit' lay within 'Spirit': the spirit of ecstasy and miracle appeared identical with the spirit of sonship [HD I p.50 n.1].

Miracles

Harnack will not allow the easy explanation of miracles as late and unreliable interpolations into the original sources, for, he notes, " ...we now know that it is not after they have been long dead...that miracles have been reported of eminent persons, but at once, often the very next day..." [WC? p.25/DW p.17]. Along with the explanation mentioned above of miracles as a common confusion of thought between the inner spiritual realm and the external physical world, Harnack also notes our incomplete knowledge of the forces pertaining to matter and our far less complete knowledge of psychic forces, which means that we cannot in fact set a sure boundary between the possible and the impossible:

"...We see that a strong will and a firm faith exert an influence upon the life of the body, and produce phenomena which strike us as marvellous...Who can say how far the influence of soul upon soul and of soul upon body reaches? No one. Who can still maintain that any extraordinary phenomenon that may appear in this domain is entirely based on error and delusion? Miracles, it is true, do not happen; but of the marvellous and inexplicable there is plenty. In our present state of knowledge we have become more careful, more hesitating in our judgment, in regard to the stories of the miraculous which we have received from antiquity. That the earth in its course stood still; that a she-ass spoke; that a storm was quieted by a word, we do not believe, and we shall never again believe; but that the lame walked, the blind saw, and the deaf heard, will not be so summarily dismissed as an illusion" [WC? pp. 27-28/DW p.18].

The most important 'miracle', of course, for Christianity is the resurrection of Jesus, and here we see Harnack's position at its clearest. He tactfully leaves open the question of the empty tomb, but makes a clear distinction between and a subordination of the Easter message (of the empty tomb) to the Easter faith (that Christ still lives). He notes the inconsistencies in the accounts of the resurrection and the post-resurrection appearances, and locates the evidence for the resurrection rather in the consciousness of the first disciples:

"Either we must decide to rest our belief on a foundation unstable and always exposed to fresh doubts, or else we must abandon this foundation altogether, and with it the miraculous appeal to our senses. But here, too, the images of the faith have their roots in truth and reality. Whatever may have happened at the grave and in the matter of the appearances, one thing is certain: *This grave was the birthplace of the indestructible belief that death is vanquished, that there is a life eternal.* It is useless to cite Plato; it is useless to point to the Persian religion, and the ideas and the literature of later Judaism. All that would have perished and has perished; but the certainty of the resurrection and of a life eternal which is bound up with the grave in Joseph's garden has not perished, and on the conviction that *Jesus lives* we still base those hopes of citizenship in an Eternal City which make our earthly life worth living and tolerable" [WC? pp.162-163].

Harnack does not attempt to explain how the first disciples reached this consciousness, but simply records it as historical fact and argues for the truth of their conviction on the basis of its continuing influence.

Harnack's elucidation of the early church's conflict with the demonic affords a very straightforward example of his approach to the supernatural. For Harnack, demon-possession is a form of insanity, occurring sporadically throughout history and in the present, but particularly prevalent in the early Christian centuries. The factors which were responsible for the rapid growth of the belief in demons and in demon-possession in the second century included the dwindling of faith in the old religions which characterised the imperial age, together with the rise of individualism which led individuals to feel responsibility for themselves and to feel flung upon their own inner resources. Free now from any control or restraint of tradition, individuals wandered here and there amid the lifeless, fragmentary and chaotic debris of traditions belonging to a world in the process of dissolution. Now they would pick up this or that, only to at last be driven, often by fear and hope, to find a deceptive support or a new disease in the absurdest of them all [M&E I p.129]. Harnack does not comment on the parallel, but one cannot help thinking that he is quietly drawing an analogy here to the spiritual anomie which characterised his own time. In any event, this, he holds, was the situation which the gospel encountered. He also agrees in part with those 'scoffers' who insist that Christianity produced the very diseases it professed to cure, claiming that the gospel did indeed bring the psychical diseases, which it found prevalent already, to a head. But it also cured them: "...and no flight of the imagination can form any idea of what would have come over the ancient world or the Roman empire during the third century, had it not been for the church..." [ibid. pp.129-130].

Harnack notes that in demonic possession the most astounding phenomena occur, many of whose details are still inexplicable [M&E I pp.125-126]. In Das Wesen Harnack notes that where possession is met the best means of encountering it is the influence of a strong personality. Jesus saw in 'demoniacs' the forces of evil and mischief, and by his marvellous power over the souls of those who trusted him he banished the disease [WC? p.59]. In Mission and Expansion he offers a fuller description of how it is that a God-centred personality is able to effect a cure:

"Whenever an empty or a sinful life, which has almost parted with its vitality, is suddenly aroused by the preaching of the Christian religion, so that dread of evil and its bondage passes into the idea of actual 'possession', the soul again is freed from the latter bondage by the message of the grace of God which has appeared in Jesus Christ. Evidence of this lies on the pages of church history, from the very beginning down to the present day...The mere message or preaching of Christianity was not of course enough to cure the sick. It had to be backed by a convinced belief or by some person who was sustained by this belief. The cure was wrought by the praying man and not by prayer, by the Spirit and not by the formula, by the exorcist and not by exorcism...wherever a strong individuality was

victimized by the demon of fear, wherever the soul was literally convulsed by the grip of that power of darkness from which it was now fain to flee, the will could only be freed from its bondage by some strong, holy, outside will..." [M&E I pp.126-127].

Harnack reminds us that exorcism played a major part in the early Christian mission, and became one very powerful method of legitimation and propaganda [ibid. p.131]. Harnack manages to find even in this strange and repellent set of ideas a kernel of spiritual truth:

"In the belief in demons, as that belief dominated the Christian world in the second and third centuries, it is easy to detect features which stamp it as a reactionary movement hostile to contemporary culture. Yet it must not be forgotten that the heart of it enshrined a moral and consequently a spiritual advance, viz., in a quickened sense of evil, as well as in a recognition of the power of sin and of its dominion in the world" [ibid. p.136].

From the treatments of enthusiasm and miracle, the resurrection and the demonic, the outlines of Harnack's response to supernatural power are clear. We see a pattern of psychological explanation, the attempt to pinpoint the spiritual truth within the phenomenon, and the leaving of some space, in view of the incompleteness of our knowledge, for the inexplicable. We shall see that treatments of the themes of eschatology and mysticism confirm this general approach.

5.c. Eschatology and mysticism

Eschatology

Harnack was well aware that the Christian message was first preached in an eschatological form [HD V p.xi], but saw this as the context of the preaching rather than as intrinsic to its content. In keeping with his conviction that such ideas lie outside of our possible experience or knowledge, he focusses on that in Christianity which is applicable in the here and now, reminding us that even in the apostolic age, when intense eschatological hopes prevailed, the task of making earthly life holy was not neglected [WC? p.173]. He can even concede that eschatology has some value in terms of the macroprocesses of history, in that it served as a highly efficacious lever for raising the earliest Christians above the world, teaching them what was of great and what of little worth and how to distinguish between what is of time and what is of eternity [WC? p.172], and holds that its breaking out here and there in history has served to guard Christianity against the threat of secularisation [HD I pp.129-130]. But regardless of its utility in the larger scheme of things, Harnack can also characterise it as an 'evil inheritance' from late Judaism, drawing Christians into restless activity, politics, abhorrence of the state and a devaluing of the most important gifts and duties of the gospel [HD I pp.101f].

He also sees eschatological beliefs as psychologically nearly inevitable from the point of view of the prophet. When discussing John the Baptist in What is Christianity? he notes that:

"...every time that a man earnestly, and out of the depths of his own personal experience, points others to God and to what is good and holy, whether it be deliverance or judgment that he preaches, it has always, so far as history tells us, taken the form of announcing that the end is at hand" [WC? p.411.

Harnack's most characteristic position is that expressed at the outset of his discussion of 'The Gospel of Jesus Christ according to his testimony about himself' in Dogmengeschichte. He says that the gospel, as it entered the world, was apocalyptic and eschatological in form and content, but that Jesus insisted that the kingdom of God had already begun with his own work, in his saving and healing activity [see WC? pp.59-60] and those who received him in faith became sensible of this beginning:

"...for the 'apocalyptical' was not merely the unveiling of the future, but above all the revelation of God as the Father, and the 'eschatological' received its counterpoise in the view of Jesus' work as Saviour, in the assurance of being certainly called to the kingdom, and in the conclusion that life and future dominion is hid with God the Lord and preserved for believers by him" [HD I p. 58].

We see here in Harnack's interpretation of Jesus' message the translation of the external-eschatological into the inner-spiritual. Harnack believed such a transformation of the received chiliastic categories was justified and that it was Jesus himself who began it [WC? p.54]. Therefore he is convinced that we are following not only the indices of the succeeding history but also the requirements of the gospel itself when we place in the foreground: "...not that which unites it with the contemporary disposition of Judaism, but that which raises it above it" [HD I p.58]. Like all epoch-making personalities, Jesus should be judged not by what he shared with his contemporaries, but by what was special and individual to himself [WC? p.54]. His uniqueness in this context lay in the fact that he discarded all of Israel's traditional eschatological expectations which were selfish and nationalistic, but abandoned nothing in which there remained a spark of moral force [WC? p.56]. Harnack attributes to Jesus the transformation of earthly chiliastic hopes into individual and spiritual ones:

"...Instead of the hope of inheriting the kingdom, Jesus had also spoken simply of preserving the soul, or the life. In this substitution lies already a transformation of universal significance, of political religion into a religion that is individual and therefore holy..." [HD I p.58].

Harnack accepts that Jesus: "...lived and spoke within the circle of eschatological ideas which Judaism had developed more than 200 years before", but he insists that: "he controlled them by giving them a new content and forcing them into a new direction" [HD I p.62]. Jesus declared that even now in this present life everyone who is called into the kingdom may be sure of God's love, guidance and protection, and the forgiveness of

sins. But it remains that everything in Jesus' proclamation is directed to the eschatological life beyond: "...and the certainty of that life is the power and earnestness of the gospel" [ibid.].

Harnack reminds us that no one can say in detail what, of the early Christian eschatological teaching, proceeds from Jesus and what from the disciples, and he underlines the central issue:

"...What has been said in the text does not claim to be certain, but only probable. The most important, and at the same time the most certain point, is that Jesus made the definitive fate of the individual depend on faith, humility and love. There are no passages in the gospel which conflict with the impression that Jesus reserved day and hour to God, and wrought in faith and patience as long as for him it was day" [HD I p.67 n.1.].

Harnack further claims that the gospel is not inseparably connected with the eschatological, world-renouncing element with which it entered the world, and in this we see his essencing procedure at its clearest. The gospel, he maintains, possesses properties which oppose every positive religion and which are the kernel of the gospel—the disposition devoted to God, humble, ardent, sincere in its love for God and the brethren. This quiet, peaceful element was strong and vigorous from the outset, even amid chiliasitic fervour. The gospel lies above the antagonisms between this world and the next, work and retirement from the world, reason and ecstasy, Judaism and Hellenism. It can therefore be united with either, and indeed must be if it is to be a living religion. Many 'incrustations' have in history defended the kernel, and doubtless more will do so. The gospel did not enter the world as a positive statutory religion, and cannot therefore have its classic manifestation in any form of its intellectual or social types, not even in the first [HD I pp. 73-75].

While Harnack cannot regret the decline of chiliasm as such, he notes that the loss of the eschatological world-view was accompanied by a loss of spiritual vitality for the masses. Cultured theologians could unite chiliasm with religious philosophy, but the ordinary people could only understand chiliasm, and for them its waning was a definite loss:

"...the old faith and the old hopes decayed of themselves and the authority of a mysterious faith took their place. In this sense the extirpation or decay of chiliasm is perhaps the most momentous fact in the history of Christianity in the East. With chiliasm men also lost the living faith in the nearly impending return of Christ and the consciousness that the prophetic spirit with its gifts is a real possession of Christendom" [HD II p.299].

Mysticism

Characteristic of post-chiliasitic Christianity was the growth of mysticism. While it is clear that Harnack's epistemology would preclude his seeing the primary operation of divine/spiritual power in any phenomena as external as miracles or chiliasm, one might have expected that Harnack would be more sympathetic to mysticism because of the inwardness of its approach

to the spiritual life. In fact it earns some of his strongest criticism. This is because he views mysticism as attempting to objectify and sensualise inner spiritual experience. It is in the context of an attack on mysticism that Harnack makes his pivotal statement about the iron ring. That passage, quoted above, continues:

"...He who does not allow his thought to be determined by experience falls a prey to fancy, that is, thought which cannot be suppressed, assumes a mythological aspect: superstition takes the place of reason, dull gazing at something incomprehensible is regarded as the highest goal of the spirit's efforts, and every conscious activity of the spirit is subordinated to visionary conditions artificially brought about" [HD I p.340].

Harnack describes how the idea of redemption in the Greek church began with an eschatological character, a looking forward to deliverance through Christ from perishableness and death, but how it also always included an awareness of possessing salvation through Christ in the present. Originally this present means of salvation had a spiritual character—knowledge of God, the world, the conditions for future salvation, plus the power to do good works and the power over demons. But under the influence of the surrounding pagan philosophies of religion this knowledge came to be seen not as clear and historically-based but as mysterious wisdom, only half comprehensible, coming directly from God and communicated by sacred initiation. A natural theology which had never been given up (neoplatonic ideas of orders of spirits and gnostic ideas of hierarchies of aeons passed into orders of angels, etc.) was combined with mysticism, the magical and sacramental; less and less attention was paid to the positive moral element, and the downfall of pure science (sic) allowed the theologians to embrace all manner of superstition [HD IV pp.253, 270-271]. There follows a typical passage in which Harnack simultaneously describes and criticises the mystical mentality:

"...they endeavoured in ever increasing measure to reach a transcendental knowledge which could be enjoyed, as it were, in a sensuous way. Like their blood-relations the Neo-Platonists, they were originally over-excited, and their minds became dulled, and thus they required a stronger and stronger stimulation. The most refined longing for the enjoyment of faith and knowledge was finally changed into barbarity. They wished to fill themselves with the holy and the divine as one fills oneself with some particular kind of food. In accordance with this the dogma, the μαθησις, was embodied in material forms and changed into a means of enjoyment—the end of this was the magic of mysteries, which swallows up everything..." [HD IV pp.271-272].

The mystical impulse to Harnack is a mistaken form of inwardness—a form of hubris which seeks to experience the things of divinity in tangible form in the here and now, and to escape from the limits of the iron ring [HD IV p.268]. Harnack's criticism is based on the premise that divine/spiritual power is truly, firstly and lastly inner, non-magical, non-sensual, non-objective: it issues from the confident assurance through faith that one is saved and results in moral empowerment, i.e. the ability to will and to do good to God and the neighbour.

In view of the fact that certainly the great mystical writers have also exhibited a great concern for moral and spiritual regeneration, Harnack rather unfairly criticises "the impulse to mystagogy, and the misguided craving to feel the proximity of the deity without being or becoming a new man" [HD IV pp.310-311]. He speaks of the 'intoxicating cup' of mysticism, and the difficulty of recalling the 'dreamer' to life [HD IV pp.290-291].

But as always, Harnack can see the positive side even of what appeared to him to be negative developments. He notes that (western) Catholic mystical piety eventually developed in the direction of rightly discerning the inherent responsibility of the individual soul, from which no authority can absolve it, and raised the vital question of the assurance of salvation, though it was incapable of giving it a satisfying answer. At this point, he maintains, mysticism points beyond itself. Catholic mystical piety rightly discerned that the Christian must always be growing, but did not recognise that this growth must have its basis in firm confidence in the God of grace, i.e. in the assurance of salvation. The one paradox the mystics could not understand, he says, was that in the spiritual life one can only become what one already is in faith [HD VI p.98].

Concomitant with the growth of mysticism in Harnack's view was the growth of 'superstition'. He held that as theology became more and more the domain of experts, the cultus received more and more importance, until for the ordinary believer a ritual system took the place of Christ [HD III p.158]. A Christianity of the second order developed, which was the heritage of a moribund antiquity and really a relapse into paganism, which included the worship of saints, relics and images, amulets, fetishes and magic [HD III p.160 n.2.]. From this sort of Christianity, Harnack insists, Islam, for all its defects, came as a real deliverer [HD IV p.269]. Yet even in the midst of rank superstition Harnack affirms the continuing possibilities of divine/spiritual power. Not even superstition can ultimately thwart the spirit which truly seeks God. As the heart which in humility and trust seeks to rise to God cannot be restrained by doctrinal formulae, so it cannot be quenched by idols, but changes them into gracious signs of God, revealing his renewing grace [HD VII p.101 n.1].

5.d. Sacraments and the concept of grace

The development of the doctrine of the sacraments and of the grace they impart is for Harnack a most serious example of the materialising and objectifying of divine/spiritual power which characterised the church until the time of the reformation. As always, it is the personality of God which is the focal-point for Harnack's treatment. Grace for Harnack is synonymous with the divine/spiritual power which arises from relationship with God. Grace is personal: there is no such thing as 'objective' grace. In the 'development' of the doctrines of grace and of the sacraments, the simple, inner-spiritual power of the gospel, enacted in a fellowship meal or symbolic washing, was transformed into a mysterious magical power, which in turn concentrated substantial coercive authority in the hands of

those who were indispensable to mediate the 'magic'. This transformation made the ordinary believer inescapably dependent on the clergy, and diminished the individual's sense of personal responsibility [HD III p.124, HD IV pp.276-277; see ch.6].

Harnack is convinced that it was the influence of paganism which brought these transformations about [M&E I pp.111-112]. One of the reasons Christianity was intelligible and impressive to pagans was because it offered sacraments, that is, symbols inwardly connected to the things they represented and conveying grace to the participant's soul: 'Every hand that was stretched out for religion, tried to grasp it in sacramental form'. Paul was the first and almost the last theologian of the early church with whom sacramental theology was really held in check by clear ideas and strictly spiritual considerations. After him the flood-gates were opened [M&E I pp.230f]. Harnack charitably reminds us, however, that these developments should not be judged from the standpoint of puritanism, for every age has to conceive and assimilate religion as it alone can, and that while the development may have been unfortunate, it was by no means irreparable [M&E I p.234].

This religious materialism was, in Harnack's view, substantially advanced by the doctrine of the Incarnation being brought into connexion with the Lord's Supper. The Incarnation was not thought to be repeated in the Lord's Supper but continued, and the sacrament was seen as the real means of deification [HD IV p.286]. In addition the nature of the sacrificial element in the Lord's Supper altered: the idea crept in that the body and blood of Christ were constantly offered to God afresh in propitiation. Thus, says Harnack, what seemed not to have been surely accomplished in the original offering was to be accomplished by a repetition of it [HD IV p.287].

Since this time, Harnack maintains, most churches, east and west, have been fettered by a doctrine and ritual of the Lord's Supper which are among the most serious hindrances the gospel has ever experienced [HD IV p.288]. The doctrine of the Lord's Supper now serves to sanction the dogma of the Incarnation and to include and summarise the entire system of doctrine and the conception of the church. Never in the history of religions, he says, has there been such a transformation, extension, demoralising and narrowing of a simple and sacred institution [ibid].

Augustine, as we have seen, is in Harnack's view the pivotal figure in the development of the theology of grace and sacrament. He holds that while Augustine knew in his own experience that religion is a personal relationship between the soul and God and that grace is this relationship, he was unable to give this idea the central place in his dogmatic theory. Grace for Augustine is not always grace through Christ—it is more the secret operation of God. This element in Augustine, which Harnack labels 'cosmic Neo-Platonic', imperils word and sacrament, and indeed redemption through Christ as such [HD V p.217]. In spite of his personal experience, Augustine largely left the old dogmatic scheme as it was, teaching that God operates by a mysterious and omnipotent impartation of grace; i.e. by powers of grace. Grace thus in Augustine's teaching preserved an objective character [HD V p.84]. The idea of the objective validity of the sacraments and of the church, however melancholy the actual moral state of

its members, was further entrenched in Augustine's teaching by the Donatist controversy [HD V pp.41-42]. Grace in this view could be had in portions or installments, and computations of sin and grace were introduced. In Augustine the religious, the personal relationship to God, receives a sequel, i.e. the moral: the will, once freed from sinfulness, becomes an effective cause of righteousness, and so the value of the forgiveness brought by grace becomes initiatory only. This strand, the idea that in the end, God crowns our merits, conflicts with Augustine's idea of predestinating grace and leads to a refined form of righteousness by works [HD V pp.218-219]. On the whole Harnack concludes that the living God and the personality of Christ lost ground in the consciousness of the church which Augustine influenced:

"...He poured the new wine into old bottles, and was thus partly to blame for the rise of that Catholic doctrine of grace, which is perhaps the most dreadful part of Catholic dogmatics; for 'the corruption of the best is the worst' (corruptio optimi pessima) [HD V p.85].

These errors were exacerbated in the medieval period, when the religious desire was less for God than for divine forces which could become human virtues [HD VI pp.278-279]. At the root of this defective concept of grace, Harnack insists, lay a defective concept of God, that is, no recognition of God's personality or even of human beings as personalities. One cannot, Harnack maintains, be raised to a higher stage other than by attaching oneself by reverence, love and trust to a person who is superior, more mature and greater: this is true on a human plane, and incomparably more so with regard to the raising of human beings from the sphere of sin and guilt into the sphere of God. No communication of objective benefits can avail—the human spirit is too free and lofty for this—but only the fellowship of person with person, the disclosure to the soul that the holy God who rules heaven and earth is its Father and that it can and may live in trustful confidence as a child in its father's house, certain that the separating guilt has been swept away. This confidence, this personal fellowship with God, alone is grace [HD VI pp.279-281].

Neither Augustine nor Thomas saw this: neither, insists Harnack, did the medieval mystics who emphasised knowing Christ as a friend, for they had in mind the man Jesus. When they thought of God it was as an inscrutable being, producing inexhaustible forces that yield knowledge and the transformation of essence. Grace for them inhabited the realm of impersonal forces. Though in theory only a little separated from God, in the course of time grace became further and further removed from God—first to the merit of Christ and then to the sacraments [ibid.].

In Thomism, Harnack tells us, the idea that God in the end treats us according to our merits came increasingly to the fore, and weakened the earnest, truly religious spirit which characterised Thomas himself. Grace appeared as 'a physical, mysterious act, and a communication of objective benefits' [HD VI p.275]. Harnack describes in detail how Aquinas distinguished between different types of grace, and indicates some of the problems with this. The ultimate cause of grace in Aquinas' system is God. The effects of grace are justification and meritorious good works. But actual justification does not take place with the original forgiveness of

sins—it only creates the impulse and beginning of it. And even in justification the will must cooperate. Thus Thomas left confused and obscure the question of what we owe to prevenient grace [HD VI pp.288, 290f]. He emphasised merit at the expense of trust (fiducia) [HD VI pp.291-292]. While he admits that Aquinas' sacramental doctrine does much good in a relative way, in Harnack's view, when one considers that it is Christianity that is under discussion, that religion of earnest spirit and comforting power: "...this structure of opus operatum, attritio and meritum is seen to be a mockery of all that is sacred" [HD VI p.226].

Luther of course made a significant breakthrough in this area. He opposed the notion that something can have value for God other than God, and hence opposed everything that savoured of merit, including monasticism and ascetism [HD VII pp.215-216]. He emphasised the faith that finds comfort in the forgiveness of sins—this, and not mystical experience, not the fitful enjoyment now of sanctified senses and knowledge which will only be fulfilled in heaven [ibid.], is Christian perfection.

Harnack expresses Luther's contribution thus:

"...Luther abolished in principle the error originating in the earliest times, that what the Christian religion concerns itself with is a good, which, however lofty it may be, is still objective. That doctrine had its root in the fundamental notion that religion is the remedy for man's finitude—in the sense that it defies his nature...According to the Catholic view, grace is the power that is applied and infused through the sacraments, which, on condition of the cooperation of free will, enables man to fulfill the law of God and to acquire the merits that are requisite for salvation. But according to Luther grace is the Fatherly disposition of God, calling guilty man for Christ's sake to Himself and receiving him by winning his trust through the presentation to him of the picture of Christ. What has Sacrament to mean here?..." [HD VII pp 216-217].

The sacraments in Luther's view are for forgiveness of sins only, are efficacious not by being celebrated but by being believed in, and are a special form of the saving Word of God. Grace clearly is once again relational, not objective. God as Father receives us by winning our trust: divine empowering comes through our confidence in God as the beloved Father of Jesus. Harnack notes that while Luther made the crucial first step in restoring this view of grace, he still allowed many catholic elements to remain, including infant baptism as a means of grace, and the centrality of the real presence to the eucharist. He thus hindered the church of the reformation for many generations from expressing the earnest spiritual character of Christianity [HD VII pp.250-251].

5.e. Summary and further observations

Harnack's position on enthusiasm, miracles, eschatology, mysticism and sacraments is entirely consistent with his convictions about what is knowable as encapsulated in the metaphor of the iron ring. They all

appear to be expressions of divine power and all earn his criticism for the same fundamental reason—that they attempt to externalise, materialise and objectify an energy which operates within and whose effects are spiritual. He is even prepared to extend this judgment to the resurrection, arguing that the stories of the empty tomb and the post-resurrection sightings are uncertain as a basis for the conviction that Jesus still lives and that the certainty of that truth rests instead upon the spiritual experience of the first disciples. His analysis of the phenomena is based on his belief that divine/spiritual power is completely inner in its sphere of operation, non-magical, non-sensual and non-objective, that it issues from the assurance, through faith, that one is saved, enjoying a firm, peaceful confidence in the God of grace, and that it results in moral empowerment, i.e. the ability to will and do good to God and neighbour.

In a characteristic manner, however, Harnack does not merely dismiss the 'supernatural' phenomena as impossible legends or misguided fantasy, but rather seeks to penetrate to the inner experiences for which the phenomena are mythological metaphors. One of the clearest examples of this is his explanation of how the intense realisation of the radicality of sin and evil and the significance of the choice to be made has 'always', historically, taken the form of eschatology, of the announcement that the end was nigh. Similarly with miracles Harnack emphasises the 'miraculous' nature of the spiritual discovery that despite appearances God is in charge and can help one so to encounter the 'blind and brutal course of nature' that life has meaning and all is ultimately well. And he is prepared to go still further, to see at least some miracles, notably those of healing and exorcism, as genuine cures, the effects in the external world of an inner empowering effected, via natural laws of which we are not yet aware, by the strong and holy personality of Jesus. This perception exactly parallels his conception of grace, which is relational, a matter of being raised to a higher level by one's attachment in love to a person of greater holiness and maturity, ultimately to the person of God.

We observe that Harnack's response to the miraculous is something of a half-way position between total rejection and unqualified acceptance, and we need to ask whether this is really satisfactory. We must also question whether the basis on which he rejects the supernatural in its own terms, i.e. his firm delineation of the boundary of what is knowable, and the basis upon which he allows the reality of miracles in some form, i.e. the incompleteness of our knowledge of the forces governing matter and the psyche, can really sit happily side by side. We must also question Harnack's perhaps conflicting desire for Christianity to possess once again the spiritual freshness and moral vigour of the early church, but to have it without the 'excesses' of enthusiasm, chiliasm and miracle by which it was then accompanied. We also wonder whether Harnack's treatment of the miraculous and supernatural has actually crossed the border from induction to reduction. One also feels his handling of mysticism and of sacraments, for whatever laudable reasons, to be uncharacteristically unsympathetic and perhaps questionably one-sided [see ch.7].

If, however, there have been any doubts in the mind about whether in the end for Harnack divine/spiritual power was, to use Wrong's terms, a property or a relation, they are settled definitively by Harnack's pronouncements on the subject of grace, which come into focus most sharply in his treatments of Aquinas and Luther. Grace can stand as a synonym for what is meant by divine/spiritual power, for it carries the same kind of duality—the ultimate source is God, but the word is also used to denote processes and activities within the human being which have been engendered by contact with the divine. It can also, like divine power, be used by many spiritual writers to indicate something 'magical'. Harnack says clearly and unequivocally that grace is not 'objective' but relational, and this, despite his often reified language, must act as our standard for any evaluation of his theology of the inner life.

CHAPTER SIX: DIVINE AND HUMAN POWERS AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

6.a. Introduction

This investigation of Harnack's constructive theology has so far been centred upon his conception of divine/spiritual power, an empowering whose sphere of activity is the interior of the human consciousness. Having thus largely confined ourselves to an exploration of 'inner space', we now turn to examine what happens when this inner power acquires a social dimension, when it confronts the external world, and especially that part of the external world which through its advocacy of the gospel lies in closest proximity to divine/spiritual power, namely the church. The fourth of the questions we are addressing to Harnack is, 'How have divine and human powers interacted in the history of the church?'

We begin to understand Harnack's reply when we look at the central thesis of Dogmengeschichte, which remained a fundamental presupposition throughout Harnack's career. This was that the central dogmas of historical Christianity, the trinity and two-nature christology, together with its central institutions, the three-fold 'apostolic' ministry, the 'apostolic' tradition, the cultus and the doctrine of the sacraments, were not in fact original or apostolic at all but had grown up gradually in the Christian communities in response to internal and external pressures. Harnack portrays these phenomena as a kind of coating or overlay—his term is 'incrustation'—which built up gradually around the central and original things of Christianity, around 'the gospel'. But Harnack's analysis suggests something more, for he interprets this process as a power struggle. In chapter three Harnack's view of divine/spiritual power as an inner event was discussed, and it was made clear that this power was a power in conflict, its primary opposition being to 'nature', to sin and to worldliness. The opposition to 'the world' is made clear in Harnack's statement in Das Wesen, quoted above, that there is a divine strength and glory, a majesty of holiness and love, which does not need and indeed excludes earthly power and splendour [WC? p.138/DW p.88]. We shall demonstrate in this chapter that Harnack equally opposes divine/spiritual power to the church, whenever that church becomes coercive toward inner freedom in any way, and when it arrogates to itself earthly powers and splendour.

6.b. The theme of transpotentiation

1. The theory in general terms

History, according to Harnack, is to be analysed in terms of the powers which shaped it. As we have suggested, even where explicit power language is absent from Harnack's account, power concepts are intrinsic to his most important ideas—the nature of dogma, the gospel itself as distinct from

its historical forms, the spiritual dilemma of humanity and the significance of Christ. Interwoven with and inextricable from the main narrative of Dogmengeschichte, which concerns the transformation of dogma throughout the history of the church, is another story, that of the transformation of power within Christianity. The church, at first a body of believers who were characterised by a high degree of inner, self-authenticating and immediate spiritual power and exercising little socio-political power either within or outside their fellowship, became a quasi-political union which achieved order, unity, influence and popularity at the price of the suppression of spiritual power under an authority which demanded absolute obedience on the basis of the highest legitimation (apostolicity and the power of the keys) [HD I pp. 45-46, 141-142, 215f; HD II pp.4-6, 72-77, 122-125]. This second story is also told within the medium of the history of early Christian missions in Mission und Ausbreitung. Harnack argues that dogma and this transformation of power were closely connected. Dogma arose partly as a response to the ebbing of spiritual power in the early communities and their subsequent need for a more stable and tangible authority as a focus for unity; yet its very appearance on the scene was a cause of further decline. Acceptance of a highly intellectualised theology replaced living faith, and the laity fell increasingly from spiritual self-reliance into tutelage under clerical gnostics [HD II pp.5-6, 83], with the church imposing itself as an 'empiric power' between the individual and salvation [HD II pp.76-77].

The church which once had been 'variance and the sword' (Matt.10: 34-35) to all earthly orders became, as the result of these changes, the conservative prop for the crumbling Roman state and civil society [HD II pp.122f]. Harnack minces no words in expressing his sense of the loss, in terms of the gospel, which this entailed. "No doubt", he writes:

"...the old Christianity had found its place in the new Church, but it was covered over and concealed...Catholicism was now complete; the Church had suppressed all utterances of individual piety, in the sense of their being binding on Christians, and freed herself from every feature of exclusiveness. In order to be a Christian a man no longer required in any sense to be a saint. What made the Christian a Christian was no longer the possession of charisms, but obedience to ecclesiastical authority, a share in the gifts of the Church, and the performance of penance and good works. The Church by her edicts legitimised average morality, after average morality had created the authority of the Church. The dispensations of grace, that is, absolution and the Lord's Supper, abolished the charismatic gifts. The Holy Scriptures, the apostolic episcopate, the priests, the sacraments, average morality in accordance with which the whole world could live, were mutually conditioned...And with all that the self-righteousness of proud ascetics was not excluded—quite the contrary. Alongside of a code of morals, to which anyone in case of need could adapt himself, the Church began to legitimise a morality of self-chosen, refined sanctity, which really required no Redeemer. It was as in possession of this constitution that the government statesmen found and admired her, and recognised in her the strongest support of the Empire" [HD II pp.124-125].

From the sense of freedom and divine/spiritual empowering of the early communities, the transformation into catholicism saw the dwindling and trivialising of this inner power and the vigorous morality which was its external expression. It witnessed also the growth of an ecclesiastical organisation whose power was clearly that of ordinary, and increasingly coercive, authority, but which bolstered and legitimated that authority by claiming the sole possession of divine/spiritual power. This organisation was prepared to use its authority to augment the secular, coercive power of the state in return for privilege and security. These three powers—the divine/spiritual power released through the gospel, the coercive power of the secular political state, and the authority of the church, in reality also external, secular and coercive but claiming to be spiritual—are the actors who will hold the stage throughout Harnack's analysis. Of the three, the power of the church is for him the most problematic. On the one hand he condemns its secularity and pious masquerading with all the fervour of a good Lutheran, but on the other he recognises the historical necessity for the rise of catholicism and does not deny the benefits which it brought both to religion and to civilisation, the chief of which being that within it, in however confused or obscure a form, the fundamental Christian message, the essence of the gospel, was enabled to survive and bear fruit to some extent.

This then is Harnack's basic theory of early church history, and everyone who writes on Harnack notes his judgment that in the rise of early catholicism, culminating in the constantinian settlement, there was a 'fall' for Christianity. Church historians of other persuasions would disagree, but all would accept that Christianity underwent a transformation during this period. One may ask, however, why this investigation has coined the term 'transpotentiation' to describe it? The word is used in the first instance as a reminder that the issue of power was central to the transformation which came upon Christianity. It is used in the second place because the tendency of 'fall' theories of the early church is to stress only the loss of its unique power: the word trans-potentiation is used to indicate that the church did not lose power in the move towards catholicism, but rather changed the type of power it exercised. It is used in the third instance to infer a possible causal connexion between the loss of the one kind of power and the gain of the other: this, though in a nuanced form, is part of Harnack's theory.

Often in Harnack's writing, human powers appear in a negative light, but he is far from writing from an anarchistic perspective. Harnack views human powers such as tradition, nationality and authority, embodied in such institutions as the law and the state, as legitimate in their own sphere. From a moral or religious point of view, however, because they deal largely with transitory and material goods, they are of limited value and secondary importance [WC? pp.104-106/DW pp.66-67]. It is when they encroach upon the free territory of the spirit and make claims for themselves as religious powers that they earn Harnack's hostility.

ii. Factors in the transpotentiation of Christianity

Just as, in Harnack's view, the early Christian preaching from the beginning was a complexio oppositorum [M&E I p.84], so the transpotentiation of Christianity had not one cause but many. They will be discussed in the order of importance which Harnack gives them.

a. The conflict with gnosticism: The important thing about gnosticism, according to Harnack, was not the Asiatic mythologoumena which were attached to it but the Greek spirit and religious interests which lay behind it. The interest in oriental religions was part of the Graeco-Roman attempt to find a revelation to serve as the assurance and basis for the philosophy of religion which it already possessed [HD I pp.228-231]. The theory was amply developed: what was lacking was the practice. They sought not simply gnosis, but gnosis soterias. The attraction to gnosticism of Christianity lay in its demonstrated spiritual and moral power. In the Christian communities they saw a cheerful asceticism and vigorous morality—the actual practice of the philosophical life:

"...That the Hellenistic spirit in Gnosticism turned with such eagerness to the Christian communities and was ready even to believe in Christ in order to appropriate the moral power which it saw operative in them, is a convincing proof of the extraordinary impression which these communities made" [HD I pp. 236-237].

Yet the influence of gnosticism on Christianity would ultimately be to enervate the very vigour which had attracted it. Gnostic teachers could quite easily gain a hearing in the Christian communities because of the fluidity of doctrinal notions, the respect paid to teachers claiming inspiration, and the lack of any final authority [HD I p.251]. This made crucial the need for resistance and unity among the Christian communities, and in time this was achieved. But the price of victory was the adoption of many of the enemy's weapons, notably intellectualism in the attempts to create a competing Christian philosophy, legitimation by means of external authorities such as correct doctrine, an authoritative canon, an 'apostolic' creed, and an appeal to unwritten 'apostolic' traditions [HD I pp. 170f, 228, 231f, 251, 253f; HD II pp.75, 294-296]. Indeed, Harnack maintains that gnosticism won in catholicism half a victory. Gnosticism represented the acute secularising of Christianity, where catholicism represented a gradual process of the same kind. Christianity was vigorous enough to reject the first, but had little awareness of or resistance to the second [HD I pp. 228, 242-243].

b. The rise of the concept of apostolicity: The concept developed gradually. It predates gnosticism, for the gnostics shared it [HD I p.216], and while the gnostic crisis intensified its importance in the church, it also reflected the altered constitution of the church itself and the authoritative position now actually held by bishops [HD II p.68f]. (It was a principle with Harnack that the theoretical conception of the church always follows the actual changes in its history, and that throughout the history of dogma it remained a stage behind the condition reached in practice [HD II p.72]) Harnack was sceptical of the assertion that the source of the fundamental doctrine and practice of the church is to be

found in the teaching of the Twelve which has been reliably preserved, and offers as a telling proof the fact that in the controversy with Marcion, no assured and watertight apostolic tradition was put forward to oppose his pauline reduction: had it existed, it most assuredly would have been used [HD I p.284].

As the concept took hold, spiritual immediacy came to be undervalued in favour of the veneration of an idealised past, embodied in the authority of the 'apostolic' creed, canon and church constitution [HD I pp. 214-217, 284; HD II pp. 1-10, 53f, 62-65, 68f, 70,74, 83-89, 93, 232, 356f; HD III p.114]. The creation of a classical period for Christianity which was on principle incapable of emulation demotivated and thus disempowered the post-classical church [HD II pp. 53-54, 356f]. The 'apostolic' canon encouraged what Harnack termed 'the fatal identification of the words of the Lord with the words of the apostles', leading to the inclusion as Christian of much material which did not proceed from Jesus [HD II p.65]. The Old Testament provided legitimations for a Christian priesthood, the monarchical episcopate and the cultus [M&E I p. 284]. The claim of the 'apostolic' church to sole possession of the Holy Spirit and, on the basis of its possession of the 'apostolic' doctrine, to be indispensable for salvation was a power claim of incalculable proportions [HD II p.76]. Thus we can see that persuasion, charismatic and competent authority in the church were now supplemented by manipulative and coercive forces of the ultimate magnitude. While these may all be termed negative consequences of the concept of apostolicity, Harnack also points out the positive gain which was achieved through it, namely the welding together of the Christian communities into one solid church which was protected from extravagances and arbitrary interpretations and was self-confident, as the body of Christ, to undertake its world mission [HD II pp. 77].

c. The accommodation to and use of secular hellenistic philosophy and culture: Though to some extent inevitable in any event in a Gentile setting, it was consciously encouraged, up to a point, for apologetic reasons. The clearest case of this was that of the doctrine of the Logos, which did much to make Christianity intelligible in the Greek world but at the cost of the real, historical Jesus [HD I pp.293-294, 357-361; HD II pp. 245-247, 262f, 318-333, 338, 342, 348, 357; HD III pp.1-5, 41-48, 72f; see ch. 4].

d. The waning of chiliasm, enthusiasm and moral vigour: As the proofs of 'the Spirit and of power' subsided after the beginning of the third century, the extraordinary moral tension of the first Christian centuries also became relaxed, paving the way for a morality adapted to worldly life and no longer equal to the strain of persecution [HD II pp.1,4]. Harnack writes:

"The depotentiation to which Christianity was here subjected appears still more plainly in the facts that the Christian hopes were deadened, that the secularising of the Christian life was tolerated and even legitimised, and that the manifestations of an unconditional devotion to the heavenly excited suspicion or were compelled to confine themselves to very narrow limits" [HD II p.6].

The forgiveness of post-baptismal sin—not the practice of the earliest communities—began to be allowed, first of gross bodily sins and later of idolatry [HD II pp. 108fl. From rigorist communities the Christian fellowships changed into societies based on unlimited forgiveness, available only through the ecclesiastical authorities [HD II p.112]. Christian moral standards were thus eroded, while at the same time the estimate of the worth of the church (as the sole medium of salvation) and of the ecclesiastical authorities (as the only ones to forgive sin, and as able to forgive all sins) increased: "In this conception the nature of the Church is depotentiated, but her powers are extended" [HD II p.113]. Along with baptism a second sacrament arose for the forgiveness of sins, the sacrament of penance. Usually Harnack describes this process in negative terms, but affirms that the moral loss did involve an apologetic gain: "The point is that now for the first time the attractive power of Christianity as a religion of pardon came fully into play" [M&E I pp.213-215]. There was a decline in the communities, over time, into lukewarm religion and average morality which led, as it always does, to a search for religious authorities external to the person [HD II pp. 124-125]. Harnack did not place this growing moral laxity on the same level, as a causal factor, as the struggle against heresy, the concept of apostolicity, or the influence of secular thought, but it remains a recurring theme in his historical writings, indicating an underlying vulnerability within the Christian communities which enabled the other, more positive forces to take hold.

e. Political ambition: Harnack devotes much less space to this factor than to the others, but does not underestimate its significance at crucial points in Christian history. He maintains, for instance, its importance with regard to the formulation of a dogmatic-legal claim to the Roman primacy [HD II pp.150fl. He also indicates that politics played a key role in the adoption of Logos christology in the western church.

Certainly in the Nicene period political power became a decisive factor in shaping both church order and church doctrine. Constantine was attracted to the church in the first place, Harnack insists, because of its potential in terms of political control:

"...This was the church on which he conferred privileges, this church with its enormous authority over the masses! These were the Christians whom he declared to be the support of the throne, people who clung to the bishops with submissive faith and who would not resist their divinely appointed authority! The Christianity that triumphed was the Christianity of blind faith which Celsus has depicted. When would a State have ever shown any practical interest in any other kind of religion?" [M&E I pp.223-224].

Through Constantine's patronage, the church was 'born into the world'. He was attracted by its political potential, and he gave it still more coercive authority:

"...Now, it was in the world; now, it was in possession and power. It took possession of the world, and it exercised its power, by proclaiming a spiritual authority which had hitherto been undreamt of, and at the same time by promulgating monasticism. Such were the standards under which it led the nations forward into the Middle Ages" [M&E II p.337].

Harnack's detailed account of the events surrounding the councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon paints a shocking, sordid and demoralising portrait (e.g. HD III p.581). If his cynicism is justified, then the authority of tradition and the prestige of the 'church fathers' involved loses much of its lustre. Harnack insists that political power was the single most determining factor in the early councils and associated controversies, as in the case of Arius and the council of Nicaea [HD IV pp. 51-59, 106], the council of Chalcedon [HD IV pp. 196, 229, 240], Nestorianism [HD IV p.189] and Pelagianism [HD IV pp.168-188]. Harnack later underlines the role of politics, both secular and ecclesiastical, in the course of the Reformation [HD V p.11].

iii. Protest and reaction against the transpotentiation of Christianity

Harnack, of course, did not limit his church-historical study to orthodoxy, but included the heretical and schismatic movements which grew up within, alongside and often in response to the Great Church. He refused to see them simply as errors and deviations, but did not go to the opposite extreme of blindly championing them because they were the historical underdogs. In most cases he conceded that the defeat of the particular heresy was historically necessary and brought real gain (e.g. HD II pp.122-125), but at the same time he mourns the losses entailed. It is interesting to see how Harnack incorporates the heretical and schismatic movements into his scheme of factors in the process of transpotentiation. Gnosticism, as we have seen, is given a directly causal role. Harnack also emphasises the role played by the opposition to Marcion in the establishing of the New Testament as a canon of scripture and an external authority [Marcion, pp. 242-244]. In many of these movements, despite their differences, he traces a common theme. He sees them as protests on behalf of the spiritual power of early Christianity, against its depotentiation in catholicism and its subordination to speculative intellectualism and ecclesiastical authority. He writes:

"Among Christians, first the Encratites and Marcionites, next the adherents of the new prophecy, and lastly the Novatians had by turns opposed the naturalisation of their religion in the world and the transformation of the Church into a political commonwealth..." [HD II p.122 n.1].

Harnack's interpretation of Marcion shows this clearly, both in Dogmengeschichte [HD I p.267-286] and in his later book. He presents Marcion's work as the first attempt at a thoroughgoing reformation of Christianity on the basis of Paul [Marcion, pp. 230-235]. Harnack maintains that at a doctrinal level Christianity had become a complexio oppositorum, a massive syncretism, largely as a result of having taken over the Old

Testament, with its diverse sources and strata, as part and parcel of its dogmatic. This 'catholicism', Harnack insists, was not in the spirit of the Founder, for to him all traditions, doctrines and forms were a matter of indifference, so long as God was known, God's will followed, and the Kingdom given room. Only a corporate body, the Zwischengrosse which was the church, with its professional theologians, could 'carry' the entirety of this complex tradition—individuals could only incorporate portions of it into their inner lives, and offer the whole respect and obedience. Marcion's biblical criticism, which eventually led him on to his rejection by the authorities and the foundation of an alternative church, represented, in Harnack's view, the attempts of many who wanted to make Christianity their own, who wanted to teach a unified (eindeutig) Christianity and adhere to it as personal faith without contradictions or stumbling-blocks. Already, Harnack observes, the catholic church named such people heretics [Marcion, pp.6-10].

Montanism is presented similarly as a protest movement [HD II pp.2, 94f, 104f, 106-108]. Harnack maintains that Montanism was not only a struggle to re-establish a stricter lifestyle, but also to retain a more independent religious attitude. In the victory of the Great Church the individuality of outstanding personalities was sacrificed in order that the majority might not become unmanageable or apostate, and religious life was bound still more firmly to the official institution:

"...Only after the Montanist conflict did the church...attain the climax of its development: henceforth it became an object of desire coveted by everyone who was on the look-out for power inasmuch as it had extraordinary forces at its disposal. It now bound the individual closely to itself; it held him, bridled him, and dominated his religious life in all directions..." [M&E I p. 437].

The Novatian schism [HD II pp.111f, 118-119, 121] and, although it managed to remain within the Great Church, the monastic movement, are presented in a similar manner [HD III pp.3f, 127,131; HD VI p.8, 95; see also Das Mönchtum, seine Ideale und seine Geschichte, Giessen, Ricker, 1881: Eng. tr. Monasticism..., London, Williams & Norgate, 1901].

The methods of the church which emerged from these conflicts would characterise catholicism down the centuries, namely, the suppression of individual religious fervour, freedom and responsibility or its canalisation into monastic mysticism, and the domination of an apostolic 'tradition' which was supplemented with, and increasingly superseded by, an apostolic clerical caste which possessed the all-important right to interpret the tradition and which claimed the powers of eternal life and death over the laity. The laity in Harnack's view suffered great loss in the power changes which occurred in the evolution towards catholicism. Where the church as a whole could be said to have been transpotentiated, the laity were merely depotentiated. The differences in power and status between clergy and laity became gradually more pronounced. When the Logos doctrine, incomprehensible as it was to all but the philosophically trained, triumphed in the church, it meant for the lay person that, "the mysterious creed, being no longer in a position practically to control life, was superseded by the authority of the Church, the cultus, and prescribed duties" [HD III p.3]. After the Novatian schism the church made clear and

firm its claim to the power of the keys. It cancelled the traditional, if anarchic, right of confessors and other 'spiritual' persons to forgive sins, and reserved the power of absolution to the bishop and his representatives. This, Harnack argues, gave to the distinction between clergy and laity, which had begun simply as a matter of function, a religious significance [HD II p.115]. Obviously the cleric's right to grant or withhold membership of the catholic church, which was the necessary prerequisite for salvation, transformed power relations between them. The false claim to divine/spiritual power, that is, to the ability to bestow upon or withhold from another that which is necessary for eternal life, produced for the clergy an immense amount of objective, coercive power, and produced for the laity an absolute dependency [HD II pp.122f; III pp.122-123]. Paradoxically, however, the laity's total exclusion from the new socio-political powers of the church lent it a measure of spiritual freedom which the clergy could never know. Harnack writes, in a description of the church at the end of the third century, that:

"...a Church had been created within which the pious layman could find a holy place of peace and edification. With priestly strife he had nothing to do, nor had he any concern in the profound and subtle dogmatic system whose foundation was now being laid. We may say that the religion of the laity attained freedom in proportion as it became impossible for them to take part in the establishment and guardianship of the official Church system. It is the professional guardians of this ecclesiastical edifice who are the real martyrs of religion, and it is they who have to bear the consequences of the worldliness and lack of genuineness pertaining to the system..." [HD II p.125f].

iv. Transpotentiation after Nicaea

Though in Harnack's view the major shifts of power in the church were virtually complete before Nicaea, the process continued throughout the period of Nicaea and Chalcedon and in the succeeding centuries. From the foundation laid by Tertullian the tendency to see spiritual things in terms of externals, in terms of legality, authority, demands and rewards passed into the western church [HD V pp.16-17]. An external view of sanctity, of objective grace, of rites with a power of their own apart from the heart of the believer, gained the ascendancy [see ch.5]. Divine/spiritual power was thus transferred from persons to institutions. Such a shift was necessary, Harnack holds, because the spiritual and moral state of individual Christians was now so low that only thus could they be saved from despair of the Christian character of the contemporary church [HD V p. 40; also HD III pp.273f]. Donatism joined the earlier movements as the protest of the old Christianity against 'secularisation', that is, the removal of the attribute of holiness from persons to institutions such as the clerical office and the ritual. The church began to see itself as primarily:

"...an *institution* whose holiness and truth were inalienable, however melancholy the state of its members. *In this thought Catholicism was first complete*" [HD V pp.41-42].

Post-Nicene theology contributed strongly to the trend towards locating spiritual power in externals. Theology proved, in Harnack's terms, 'stronger than religion', changing from the formulation of an experience first into a philosophical proposition and eventually into a legal statute requiring obedience. The 'spiritual things' which are the sum and substance of theology became vehicles of compulsion [HD III p.131; HD XV p.137], and the church's quasi-political power became virtually indistinguishable from the world's [HD VI p.2.n.2.].

v. 'Pleas in mitigation'

Harnack's description of the process of transpotentiation in the Christian church is not that of a neutral bystander. He is engagé, and in his judgment there is no doubt that the process, taken as a whole, was a negative one entailing much loss to Christianity. In the first instance the 'right' kind of power was replaced by the 'wrong' sort, that is, empowering of an interior, nutrient and persuasive kind, diffuse and 'democratic' in terms of its scope of operation and appropriate to 'religion', was replaced by empowering of an external and coercive kind, concentrated and 'oligarchic' in terms of its scope of operation and appropriate perhaps to politics or social organisation but not to 'religion'. But Harnack's sense of offence and outrage is not located in this fact alone: an even greater offence to him is the fact that the church came to claim that, when exercised by it, the second kind of power was in fact identical with the first and shared its divine origin. It is the disguising of the second kind of power, and its legitimation by claiming identity with the first kind that Harnack finds so offensive. He cannot accept the church's claim that its temporal organisation and institutions have intrinsic religious value and constitute in fact a spiritual power, and an indispensable spiritual power at that, standing as a middle term between God and the believer. In his view this is simply a crime against the truth.

Harnack cannot approve of the process of transpotentiation, and his disapproval is frequently impassioned, but nevertheless he recognises that much of the process was historically necessary, perhaps inevitable. We therefore find in his writing, frequently in conjunction with strong denunciations, numerous 'pleas in mitigation' for the 'crime'. Harnack rarely indulged in the bitter anti-catholic polemic which characterised the protestantism of his time. He argues that the early church did what it did more as a necessary response to historical exigencies than out of greed for temporal power. He reminds us that while comparison of the church at the end of the third century with primitive Christianity will always be disheartening, a truer comparison is that between the Christian and the non-Christian social organisations of that time, between church and empire, clergy and magistrates [HD III p.125]. He further maintains that while the church was wrong to in effect trade its divine/spiritual power for socio-political powers, it did in fact use the latter largely for good. He writes:

"Amidst the general disorganisation of all relationships, and from amongst the ruins of a shattered fabric, a new structure, founded on the belief in one God, in a sure revelation, and in eternal life was being laboriously raised. It gathered within it more and more all the elements still capable of continued existence; it readmitted the old world, cleansed of its grossest impurities, and raised holy barriers to secure its conquests against all attacks. Within this edifice justice and civic virtue shone with no greater brightness than they did upon the earth generally; but within it burned two mighty flames—the assurance of eternal life, guaranteed by Christ, and the practice of mercy. He who knows history is aware that the influence of epoch-making personages is not to be sought in its direct consequences alone, as these speedily disappear: that structure which prolonged the life of a dying world, and brought strength from the Holy One to another struggling into existence, was also partly founded on the Gospel, and but for this would neither have arisen nor attained solidarity..." [HD II pp.125f].

Here Harnack sees the church as a vehicle, despite its faults, through which God gave strength and direction to a world in the process of violent transformation. He is able to accept the very limited excellence of the church at the end of the third century because it needed to be the shape it was in order to smooth the transition of western civilisation from antiquity to the middle ages. This provides a good example of Harnack's conviction that the church is never an end in itself, that the supreme task of the Spirit of God has not to do with the church, but with the world, and embraces all of history and culture and not just that which is labelled as religion. Harnack is thus the more easily able to accept even temporary setbacks to the gospel because they often appear to him as part of the longer-term strategy of the Lord of history. He can point out to us the positive and lasting achievements of the catholic settlement for civilisation, the human spirit and religion as well, and speak with admiration of the creation which broke up the external forces assailing Christianity and in which the highest blessings of the gospel have continued to be accessible [e.g. HD II pp. 4, 14, 77f; see also M&E I pp.205, 234-237]. The legalism of the catholic church was a barrier to true religion, but not in Harnack's view an insurmountable one: if Jesus could have the gospel and be a Jew, one can adhere to the gospel within the catholic church [HD II p.4]. Harnack's confidence in the ability of the gospel, and of the soul which truly seeks God, to triumph despite outward circumstances affords him the ability to judge counter-movements with moderation [see WC? pp.266, 298], and his estimate of the darkness imposed upon the gospel by catholicism is inevitably affected by the light which he sees dawning with Luther.

vi. The root cause of transpotentiation

As we have seen, many factors were involved in the process of transpotentiation in early Christianity. If one is, at a theoretical level, to attempt to ascertain the causes, in Harnack's view, of this transpotentiation, the historical and historically-conditioned ideological factors mentioned above play a major part. But in Harnack's understanding

transpotentiation was not just an ad hoc response to historical contingencies—it also represents the working-out of an historical 'law' which is the equivalent of the law of entropy. Religions in Harnack's view never improve with age:

"...No religion gains anything through time; it only loses. If a hurricane does not pass over it and purify it again and again, it gets stifled in its own withered foliage..." [HD IV pp. 310-311].

Harnack held that the original conception of faith, which Luther eventually renewed, was in the course of history transformed according to a law of history:

„Es ist der Gang der Dinge, der sich in der Religionsgeschichte immer wiederholt: von Glaubensgedanken zum philosophisch-theologischen Lehrsatz, und vom Lehrsatz, der Erkenntnis verlangt, zum Rechtssatz, der Gehorsam fordert, oder zur heiligen Reliquie" [Dog.⁴ II p.314; quoted in Meijering (1978) p.52].

Kaltenborn reiterates the theme, noting that Harnack maintained that the flow of history always rationalises, levels and corrupts (rationalisierend, nivellierend, verschlechternd) [Kaltenborn p.30].

This idea of a law which indictates the inevitable downhill course of religion over time is paralleled by Wrong's description of 'tendential laws'. He asserts that each of the forms of power has a built-in tendency to metamorphose over time into a different form when the power relation recurs often enough, usually in the direction of greater permanence and coerciveness [Wrong pp.75f]. Rieff suggests that the inevitability is to be explained by reference to the power-hunger of the western psyche:

"To Harnack it was not an astonishing development—this movement of western religious energy from faith to institution. He understood that the entire movement was inevitable; the power-hunger of the western psyche remains always at work..." [Intro. to Outlines, (unnumbered) p.10].

The most obvious sociological parallel to Harnack's 'law of history' is, of course, Weber's routinisation of charisma, in which charismatic authority, based upon the attractive and exceptional qualities of a person, becomes, over time, institutionalised, based on office-holding rather than personality, and legitimated in terms of tradition. Weber viewed this shift as essential, if power was to be maintained, in order to counteract the inherent instability of charismatic authority and resolve the problem of succession [see Wrong p.63].

Harnack's descriptions of the gradual diminution of pneumatic and chiliastic phenomena and the decline in moral rigour fit this model well, as does the increasing interest in external authorities with which he associates this spiritual laxity. Harnack also insists that an institutional conception of the church made headway in both east and west

'because it was inevitable' [HD V p.42]. The sociological concept of institutionalisation was one with which Harnack was familiar, though he would probably not have used the word. For all his insistence on personality, he acknowledged that the effects of great personalities are not to be found in them alone, but also in the institutions to which they give rise. Irmischer, as we noted in chapter one, credits Harnack with playing a decisive role in shifting the emphasis in the study of history away from an exclusive preoccupation with personality towards a deeper awareness of the historical importance of institutions. Given that for Harnack there was no wall of division between sacred and secular history, and religion, whatever else it might be, was a human pursuit subject to the same laws of development and decay as other human pursuits, the institutionalisation of the gospel would be, however regrettable, deemed to be inevitable.

The striking similarities of Harnack's view to Weber's routinisation should not, however, blind us to the differences. In Weber's scheme the exchange of powers is from a precarious, ephemeral type of power based on emotion to a more stable, durable and 'real' kind of power, and may be judged, in its own terms, to be a movement from an inferior to a superior type of power. To Harnack the exchange of powers is from the ultimately real and supremely valuable type of power to one of only temporal reality and strictly limited worth, and is judged to be a movement from the superior to the inferior. The difference, of course, is rooted in a different attitude towards transcendence.

Another way in which Harnack differs from Weber is that for him the institutionalisation of Christianity and the concomitant loss of access to divine/spiritual power is not the end of the story. Religions can and do become corrupt and decline, but they can also be purified and reformed. One religion in particular, unique in its status and its power, is also unique in its ability to be recast and reformed, and to resurface with vigour after periods of torpor. So, in the case of Christianity, the pessimism of Harnack's 'law of history' is limited and provisional. It is qualified by his observations of the reformations of Christian history and by his teleology—his conviction that the course of history is and shall continue to be determined by the Spirit of God.

Emphasis upon the inevitability of transpotentiation in Harnack may mitigate but does not absolve the actors in the process of responsibility for their actions, as his sometimes strident tone manages to communicate. Thus the causes of transpotentiation must both be sought, in Harnack's view, in the inevitable historical process of decay and also in the pressures of Christianity's particular history, the culpable laziness and mediocrity of the majority of believers, and the equally culpable power-seeking of the few.

6.c. Authority

Wrong maintains that authority is a special case of power [Wrong, p.23]. As was established in chapter two, it constitutes the chief form of power exercised in religion, and because of this merits specific attention in this investigation. What Harnack had to say about authority illuminates his thinking about all types of power and is vital to his theory of transpotentiation.

For Harnack the creation of authority constitutes the first and decisive step in the transpotentiation process. It comes into effect at the moment when divine/spiritual power, operative within the individual and communicated to the individual through ideas and persons, becomes externalised, in that it becomes imputed, on a permanent basis, to the persons and/or ideas through which it has reached the individual. Before this moment divine/spiritual power is diffuse and egalitarian, and many persons and many expressions of thought are potentially channels of the grace of God: after this moment, 'some are more equal than others', and divine/spiritual power becomes channelled through specific holy doctrines and holy persons. The process is a gradual one, but the channels become increasingly narrow, and eventually the holy persons declare the doctrines, and their own mediation, to be indispensable for access to divine/spiritual power.

As we established in 6.a., Harnack accepts that the creation of external authorities in religion, like transpotentiation itself, is human and inevitable. He still insists, however, that it occurs for negative reasons. In an ideal world, and an ideal church, there would be no need for any religious authority other than the authority of God expressing itself in the consciousness of each believer. Harnack suggests that this was fairly nearly the case in the earliest church, but that in response to the pressing historical need for unity and to the natural processes of decay resulting in spiritual mediocrity, the situation changed. It is the half-religious person, Harnack insists, who creates authorities [HD II pp.124-125].

In Mission and Expansion Harnack describes both the psychology and the evolution of authority within the church. He notes that already by the time of Celsus and Lucian Christianity was being accused of being doctrinaire, unquestioning and discouraging of thought. Preaching of this kind, he notes, is only possible if at the same time some powerful authority is set up, and such authority did indeed exist in Christianity. First and foremost, as a result of Paul, there was the authority of the revealed will of God as disclosed in the mission of the Son. Here, says Harnack, external and internal authority (by which he appears to mean objective and subjective authority) blended and coincided, for while Paul held that the divine will is certainly capable of making itself felt as such without humanity understanding its purposes or right (Romans 9f), he was equally convinced that God's gracious will makes itself intelligible to the inner person [M&E I pp.219-221]. But even in Paul the external and internal authority vested in the cross of Christ was accompanied by other authorities which claimed the absolute obedience of faith—i.e. the written word of the sacred documents and the sayings of Jesus [ibid.].

For all the emphasis on obedience, Paul tried to legitimate his authorities by reason rather than demanding a sacrifice of the intellect. But other teachers were very different:

They simply erected their authority wherever they went; it was the letter of Scripture more and more, but ere long it became the rule of faith, together with the church...True, they endeavoured to buttress the authority of these two magnitudes, the Bible and the church, by means of rational arguments...In so doing they certainly *did not* demand an *absolutely* blind belief. But, first of all, it was assuredly not every missionary or teacher who was competent to lead such proofs. They were adduced only by the educated apostles and controversialists. And in the second place, no *inner* authority can ever be secured for the Bible and the church by means of external proofs. The latter really remained a sort of alien element. At bottom the faith required was blind faith..." [M&E I pp. 221-222].

Harnack continues, unfolding his view of the psychology of external authority:

"Still, it would be a grave error to suppose that for the majority of people the curt demand that authorities must be simply believed and reason repudiated, acted as a serious obstacle to their acceptance of the Christian religion. In reality, it was the very opposite. The more peremptory and exclusive is the claim of faith which any religion makes, the more trustworthy and secure does that religion seem to the majority; the more it relieves them of the difficulty and responsibility of reflecting upon its truth, the more welcome it is. Any firmly established authority thus acts as a sedative. Nay more. The most welcome articles of faith are just the most paradoxical, which are a mockery of all experience and rational reflection; the reason for this being that they appear to guarantee the disclosure of divine wisdom and not of something which is merely human and therefore unreliable. 'Miracle is the favourite child of faith'. That is true of more than miracles; it applies also to the miraculous doctrines which cannot be appropriated by a man unless he is prepared to believe and obey them blindly.

But so long as the authorities consisted of books and doctrines, the coveted haven of rest was still unreached. The meaning of these doctrines always lies open to some doubt. Their scope, too, is never quite fixed. And, above all, their application to present-day questions is often a serious difficulty, which leads to painful and disturbing controversies. 'Blind faith' never gains its final haven until its authority is *living*, until questions can be put to it, and answers promptly received from it. During the first generations of Christendom no such authority existed; but in the course of the second century and down to the middle of the third, it was gradually taking shape--I mean, *the authority of the church as represented in the episcopate*. It did not dislodge the other authorities of God's saving purpose and the holy Scripture, but by stepping to their side it pushed them into the background. *The auctoritas interpretiva is invariably the supreme and real authority*" [M&E I pp.222-223].

As distance (both in time and in praxis) from Christ and the first believers increased, the question of the exercise of legitimated human leadership within the church became more and more pressing [see HD III pp.214-228]. All conceptions of the tradition were agreed that the church was invested with authority by its connexion with the Holy Spirit. But by whom and when did the church speak? Who had the final authority to interpret dogma? In the post-Nicene period there were several contenders for this position, now that the charismatic 'offices' of apostle, prophet and teacher had vanished. First, of course, there was the episcopate, from the third century onwards, though a strict conception of it like Cyprian's was not universally held for a long time. Then there were the provincial synods, which were accorded a certain inspiration. There were also the ecumenical councils, which were originally an idea of Constantine's. The idea grew up in the fourth century that the council of Nicaea was infallible; later this was transferred to ecumenical councils generally, and in the east from the seventh century onwards it was a settled proposition that the Holy Scriptures and the seven ecumenical councils were the sources of Christian truth. To answer the problem of how to handle doctrinal disputes on which a council had not pronounced, reference was made to the bishops of major chairs, among whom Rome was pre-eminent, even in the east [HD III p.224]. But it was never made clear how far the patriarchs really constituted an authority in dogma, or their relationship to the ecumenical councils.

As a logical extension of the concept of apostolicity, the principles of antiquity, unanimous attestation and catholicity also functioned as an authority and were held to decide an issue. This idea too, Harnack maintains, was not without its difficulties, and he notes that the church gradually extended the length of time seen as 'antiquity': in the fourth century everything before Origen was 'ancient', where in the fifth century everything up to and including Athanasius was included. The question of the relative weight of the councils and the 'consensus patrum' (which hardly existed anyway) remained unresolved. Of the many contenders for authority, Harnack concludes that:

"...The Church, as it is, with its graduated orders, crowned by the Patriarchs, constituted the tradition and the authority. But the authority of no factor in this system possessed, when isolated, any significance whatever. It might not assert itself at the expense of the rest. Its dignity was founded on its being a part of *antiquity*" [HD III p.228].

The authority of the church was, then, rooted in antiquity, in its preservation of the legacy of the apostles. But antiquity, Harnack insists, was an elastic and chaotic concept. It also raised the further difficulty of how to explain novelties in the church, especially in the sphere of doctrine, such as the use of the unbiblical term 'homoousios'. In the west, the power of councils to 'unfold' doctrine was established, but it was never clearly spelt out in the east. Excuses were sometimes made for the older Fathers as having written at a time when dogma was not yet explained or sharply formulated, or in terms of their writing lacking the necessary exactness [HD III pp.228-229].

Harnack is at pains to demonstrate the insufficiency of this pluriform external authority structure, and the artificiality of its construction of antiquity and tradition. The results are well-argued and persuasive, but by no means problem-free. His most sympathetic and sensitive critics have pinpointed the issue of authority as one of considerable difficulty in Harnack's work.

Neufeld maintains that Harnack thought in only a very preliminary way about such presuppositions as how the authority of tradition and its Verbindlichkeit could be explained [Neufeld (1977) pp.287f]. He defends him against the oft-repeated charge of religious anarchy (Schwarmgeistere!) [ibid. p.351], but criticises his reductionism in a now-familiar way [ibid. p.352]. He is also critical and somewhat sceptical of Harnack's emphasis on freedom and liberation, suggesting firstly that it owed more to the rallying-cries (Schlagworten) of the nineteenth century than to the gospel, and secondly that it is unrealistic to conceive of a power (Kraft) in which freedom is not at the expense of the other but found in the Zusammenwirken of all, and which overcomes dialectic. Harnack failed, in Neufeld's eyes, to ascertain any dogmatically effective power of conviction (durchschlagend Überzeugungskraft). Now, he asks, that what the church teaches about Jesus Christ can no longer simply be equated with the historical Jesus, what binding force can that teaching have? In other words, what can fill the vacuum left behind by the loss of historicity as a legitimacy-claim on the part of ecclesiastical authority?

Meijering's attention is focussed more directly on the tension in Harnack between external and internal authority. He rightly perceives that Harnack's deepest conviction was that for faith no external authority should be required, but only the inner authority which is Christ himself [Meijering (1978) pp.57-58]. However, Meijering continues, Harnack was an historian and a realist. He quotes his statement that no strong religious faith in the world has existed which has not at a decisive point called upon an external authority and been convinced of that authority's absolute power (Macht). The human heart, Harnack continued, longs for it, and while the spiritual Christian experiences the Spirit of God immediately as Lord, the unspiritual always needs a mediating authority—person, book or church—and even the most 'spiritual' seldom gets beyond it [ibid.p.58-59]. Thus in Harnack's scheme of things external authority becomes 'necessary' as a concession to human weakness. Meijering holds that Harnack set out to undermine the external authority of dogma, but, sceptical of his own scepticism, he also felt the need of an external authority to cling to [ibid. p.56]. Dogma could not and did not become for Harnack a legitimate external authority, but Meijering suggests that Harnack's fascination with dogma finds its explanation here [ibid. p.61-62]. This of course begs the question as to what for Harnack could possibly constitute a legitimate external authority. Meijering has no suggestion to make on this point.

Kaltenborn also fastens upon this problem in Harnack, and maintains that it exemplifies the chief dilemma of his entire theology: he clearly saw the necessity of an external authority for the existence of faith, but despaired of discovering the reason for it [Kaltenborn, p.64]. While Kaltenborn sees this attitude as a flaw in Harnack's thought, he perceives and endorses in Harnack's ideas and example a new and salutary relation to

human/political/social power (Macht), rooted both in his positive attitude towards the world and his insistence that the church should serve and not dominate. It is an attitude in which there is no striving for power in order to rule humanity in the interests of the church, but in which the opposite tendency—the identification of power with evil and the complete renunciation of power in favour of an inwardness which is a flight from responsibility for our world into metaphysics—is equally abjured [ibid. pp.16,149]. Kaltenborn sees Harnack's own relations with Kaiser Wilhelm as illustrative of this attitude. The unjust slurs of Prince von Bülow to the contrary, Kaltenborn states that the Babel-Bibel controversy proves that Harnack never sought royal favour for its own sake, but so that the ideas which he held might have the largest possible radius of action. Power for him was not evil in itself, so long as one continually sought to employ it for positive goals [ibid. p.16]. This perhaps characterises Harnack's attitude towards external human powers generally, but I do not think that Harnack's attitude towards such powers when employed in the church is so straightforwardly positive. There also appears to be at least some contradiction between the attitudes to power which Harnack demonstrated in his own life and those which he espoused in his writings [see 6.e. and ch.7 below].

6.d. The reformation solution to the problem of transpotentiation

We find insights into Harnack's positive alternatives, both for authority and for the problem of transpotentiation in general, in his portrait of the reformation. Curialism represented to him an extreme form of ecclesiasticism, of human power arrogating to itself the title of divine. It: "...treated Church and religion simply as an outward form of domination, and sought to maintain and extend them by means of force, officialism, and an oppressive system of dues" [HD VII p.5]. In it one witnessed 'the complete secularising of religion by politics' [HD VII pp.7-8]. Curialism aroused a reaction based on Augustine, (Wycliffe, Huss, Wesel, Wessel) which led on to the Reformation [HD VII p.16]. Power politics, ecclesiastical and secular, played a major part in this revolution, but at its heart lay another struggle, that to restore to its rightful place the divine/spiritual power of the gospel.

The reformation had, in Harnack's terms, three 'issues'—Tridentine catholicism, socinianism, and protestantism. In the counter-reformation curialism triumphed [HD VII pp. 38f, 55, 63]. In its intellectualism, socinianism missed the heart of the matter, i.e. religion as a relationship between persons and as the power of the living God [HD VII pp. 120, 127, 167]. Tridentine catholicism and socinianism were in Harnack's view both essentially further outworkings of medieval Christianity. In protestantism, however, Harnack saw 'the restoration of Pauline Christianity in the spirit of a new age [HD VII p.168], and in this a significant, if still only partial, reversal of the transpotentiation of the catholic settlement.

Harnack represents the reformation as the completion of the work of Augustine. Augustine had begun the breaking down and recasting of dogma,

but: "...the sceptic stopped short before the formal authorities of Catholicism". The neoplatonic influence played its part as well, and: "...besides, Augustine knew not yet how to enter into sure possession of the power given through faith in God as the Father of Jesus Christ " [HD VII p.228]. Lack of a steady and sure possession of the spiritual power available through the gospel handicapped Augustine, as did his continued acceptance of the impressive power claims of the 'authorities' of the church. Harnack's implication is that Luther was able to finish Augustine's work because he clearly understood where the real and legitimate power of Christianity is to be found.

For Luther there was only one authority, the Christ of history as preached, the Word of God. All external infallibilities were rejected, including the infallibility of scripture, though Harnack admits that Luther did not always hold to this [HD VII pp.223f]. All human powers in the church were challenged, relativised and divested of their (pseudo-)sacred nature—the political powers of the church hierarchy, the authority of tradition and of ancient dogma, even the authority of a written canon—in the interests of giving expression to the one truly spiritual power. The reformation:

"...set up the evangelical faith in place of dogma, this being done by its cancelling the dualism of dogmatic Christianity and practical Christian self-criticism and life-conduct. But what it placed at the centre of practical Christian self-criticism and life-conduct was just faith itself and its certainty" [HD VII pp.228-229].

Harnack is at pains to point out the error of the belief that the cancelling of dogmatic Christianity by Luther was equivalent to a neutralising of all 'faith that is believed' (fides quae creditur) and that all that was required was pious subjective feeling. The truth is that Luther's reformation:

"...only restored its sovereign right to faith, and thereby to the doctrine of faith—in the sense of its being nothing but the doctrine of Christ—after the uncertainties of the Middle Ages...and...set up theology, i.e., the true theology of the cross (theologia crucis), as the decisive power in the Church" [HD VII p.229].

Thus Harnack, while repudiating dogma, still reserves a place in reformed and restored Christianity for theology, and he does not accept Sabatier's view that the intellectual or theoretical element in dogma is merely the symbolic expression of the individual's spiritual experience or of the religious spirit of the church. On the contrary, Harnack holds that while the intellectual element is partly the attempt to express religious feeling, and is therefore symbolical:

"...within the Christian religion it belongs to the essence of the thing itself, inasmuch as this not only awakens feeling, but has a quite definite content which determines and should determine the

feeling. In this sense Christianity without dogma, that is, without a clear expression of its content is inconceivable. But that does not justify the unchangeable permanent significance of that dogma which has once been formed under definite historical conditions" [HD I p.22].

The manner in which Harnack continues to assert the 'rights' of theology within Christianity give rise to speculation as to whether it might not be part of his answer to the problem of a legitimate external authority, and this in turn raises many questions [see ch.7 below].

Luther's work, however, represented only a good beginning. Harnack criticises him for not being thoroughgoing enough in ending the bondage of Christianity to powers and authorities other than the gospel, i.e. for allowing the continuing sway of the early ecumenical councils, the formulae of ancient dogma, medieval biblical exegesis, something still of the medieval view of sacrament, and remnants of nominalism. This was combined with a deep distrust of reason and a revelling in absurdity and paradox [HD VII pp. 229-230, 233-236]. In Harnack's eyes, Luther's biggest deficiency, which led him into most of the others, lay in his inadequate grasp of history [HD VII, p.234].

6.e. Summary and further observations

Harnack's answer to the fourth question of this investigation, in brief, is that in response to the exigencies of history and human weakness, and in obedience to a general law of religion, external powers of a social and political type gradually encroached upon, struggled with, and eventually usurped the original supremacy of inner, divine/spiritual power in Christianity, causing the latter to diminish in terms of accessibility and effectiveness. In Harnack's theory, which I have termed 'transpotentiation', divine/spiritual power was contained, supplemented and virtually replaced in the Christian communities by the external human powers of catholicism—the 'objective' authority of an 'apostolic' creed and canon, and of an 'apostolic' succession of clergy whose mediation became indispensable to the laity and whose bishops possessed the supreme authority, the right to interpret the tradition. Over time these authorities became more coercive and overtly political. The chief crime of these external human powers in Harnack's eyes was their false claim to be religious powers and to be absolutely necessary as the middle term between the individual and divine/spiritual power. External, social power in Harnack's view is legitimate in its own sphere and is even, in some form, necessary within the church, but it becomes unacceptable when it encroaches upon the free territory of the spirit. The divine force of the gospel, however, has never been extinguished: it breaks out afresh throughout Christian history and especially at the reformation.

Many factors led to the transpotentiation of Christianity, the conflict with gnosticism, the rise of the concept of apostolicity, the rapprochement with secular philosophy and culture, the waning of chiliasm, enthusiasm and

moral vigour, the pressure of politics. Underlying them all, was the 'natural law', similar to Weber's routinisation of charisma, which dictates that religious movements are at their best in their beginnings and decline thereafter unless vigorously and repeatedly reformed. The 'heretical' movements of early church history Harnack represents largely as protests, on behalf of what still remained of original Christianity, against its further transpotentiation. Despite his essentially negative judgment of the transpotentiation process Harnack offers many pleas in mitigation, including the pressure brought to bear upon Christianity by historical events and the resulting paramount need for unity, plus the fact that the church, at least at the beginning, used its new powers for good. He can go even beyond historical necessity to enumerate the benefits of the change for religion and culture. Several factors enable his mitigation—his own moderate and generous temperament, his ultimate concern with the larger purposes of history to which the Lord of history subordinates even the church, his high estimate of the gospel's ability to triumph eventually regardless of obstacles, and perhaps a concern to justify his own efforts at a rapprochement between Christianity and secular culture.

Harnack sees the development of external authorities as the first step in Christianity's transpotentiation, and describes the psychological state which reaches out for such authorities. While acknowledging its inevitability, Harnack judges external authority in religion to be a disempowering sedative. He praises Luther's reformation for substantially reversing the transpotentiation process and for correcting the balance between internal and external powers in Christianity, though he insists that Luther did not go far enough to curtail the influence within protestantism of the pseudo-religious catholic external authorities.

Harnack's transpotentiation theme is satisfying in many ways and while representing a definite point of view, it is sophisticated and nuanced in terms of his theories of causality. It does, however, have its difficulties.

We observe in his treatment of the transpotentiation theme once again that Harnack maintains an uncompromising dualism, a separation of divine/spiritual power from what he terms human powers—social and political forces, but also ideological constructs such as tradition—operative in church history. We still need to ask whether such a dualism is workable.

We also note the considerable tension which this dualism creates for the possibility of any external human authority or power in the church. Frequently Harnack appears to suggest that divine/spiritual power is the sole legitimate power in Christianity, which raises the question as to how a church, being an external and social entity, is either possible or permissible. The theme of transpotentiation typifies Harnack's view of the involvement of 'human' power in religion as negative, but he does in the end concede the necessity of involvement with human powers if one wishes to establish a spiritual power on earth, and says in terms that in Christianity human authority is needed as well as the authority of the gospel. It is, Harnack says, the inner impulses of a faith which constitute the force by which it exists and is preserved, but conditions

are necessary under which this force can become operative. All faiths appeal at some point to an external authority, he adds. The only point is to determine the right external authority, and the just relationship between the internal and the external [HD V pp.82f].

We further observe that Harnack's interpretation is a version of the 'fall' theory of the transformation of early Christianity, and we need to ask about the terms on which he is able to integrate this fact with his conviction that the Spirit of God is Lord of history.

Harnack's insistence that the catholic settlement involved a blasphemy—the imputation to the earthly structures of the church of a religious, that is, a spiritual, significance to which they had no claim—leaves us wondering what, if any, religious significance his system can accord to the church.

CHAPTER SEVEN: HARNACK'S CONTRIBUTION TO A THEOLOGY OF POWER

7.a. Introduction: Harnack's power theology

Intrinsic to Christianity's self-definition from the beginning has been the missionary calling, and if that is the case, then apologetics need to be at the centre of the theological task. And because of the state of the world and of human consciousness at this time, the apologetic task in the twentieth century needs to be conducted in terms of power. The truth of the teachings, fundamental to Christianity, of the providence of an almighty God, that is, the power of a good and loving God to control history, and of the accessibility of that power to human beings who are willing to yield to it, is not obvious to twentieth-century minds. As, presumably, in all 'bad times' of human history, the problem of theodicy, of affirming at one and the same time the unlimited power and the unparalleled goodness of God, acquires a special sharpness. For some reason, probably having to do with the influence of the character of Jesus, it is easier for twentieth-century people to believe in the goodness of God than in God's 'almighty' power.

It is therefore primarily on the issue of divine power that the Christian apologetic needs to focus at this time. To do so creatively and effectively it needs to learn from any examples in the past that have addressed the issue. Harnack is particularly valuable because he grasped with absolute clarity the nature of the apologetic task which stood before him, and which stands before theology still.

Harnack addresses the problem of affirming divine power despite its apparent absence in the first instance by employing several dualisms. The first of these involves acknowledging the distance that exists between God and the world which is built into the very structure of reality, as the metaphor of the iron ring infers, and the antipathy of the world to God. Harnack's life-long attraction to Marcion makes sense at this point. This state of things of course is not, as in Marcion, the original condition: Harnack held that it came about through a 'fall' which happened 'we know not how'. Without attempting via a myth or any other route to offer an explanation, Harnack simply affirms the state of alienation which exists between God and fallen 'nature'.

The second dualism pertains to the realm of human experience. It could be expressed as a spirit/nature dualism, but perhaps more accurately as a division of human reality into an interior and an external world. The theodicy takes place when God is 'excused' from exercising direct influence in the external world, both on the basis of the structure of reality and on the basis of the fallenness of 'nature', and when God's power over the interior world of human consciousness is affirmed. Through influencing human behaviour in the external world by means of transforming human interior consciousness, God then achieves a 'back door' into 'nature' and an indirect, but nonetheless effective, power there.

This alternative or subversive strategy, this portrait of an apparently weak God engaging in guerilla warfare, does not, however, completely fill up the claims of the Christian tradition of God's absolute power. Harnack is able to complete the satisfaction of this tradition with a this-worldly variant of the time-honoured means of eschatology, by taking the long view of history and affirming that despite appearances in the short term, God remains, as one looks down the millenia, the creator spiritus and Lord of history. Harnack indeed also possesses a more traditional eschatological expectation of the Kingdom, that is, 'the realised dominion of the good', but this remains a shadowy, far-off event, functionally irrelevant to existence now. Possession of this belief completes the theodicy in a formal manner, but Harnack's centre of gravity remains with the two dualisms of our present existence, supplemented by the 'long view' of history.

The virtue of this method of theodicy is that it is believable within the iron ring. It acknowledges the reality of the human experience of evil, futility and suffering. It also acknowledges the human experience of inner transformation, renewal and empowering, and the human experience, related to this transformation, of contact with an utterly benign ultimate presence. It is refreshingly honest in admitting what cannot be known, i.e. how it was that the world which a good God created now exists in alienation from and opposition to its creator. The biggest problem with Harnack's method, as we shall discuss below [see 7.c.], remains the sharpness of his dualism.

7.b. Analysis of Harnack's system

Harnack's language where spiritual power is concerned is, as we have noted, a source of confusion. When discussing what for him is the real and ultimate power, the inner power of the gospel, it is emotive and reified, the language of a pietistic supernaturalism, and one could be excused for assuming that he viewed spiritual power simply in supernaturalist terms. This, as we have seen, is not the case, but his use of language is not without its significance. It indicates the ambivalence remaining in his own thought about the subject, and it plays an important role in his mediatorial strategy.

In his treatment of divine/spiritual power Harnack plays not only an apologetic role to the unchurched, but also serves as a mediator between different styles of theology. He is a bridge figure between the declamatory supernaturalism often characteristic of orthodox theological treatments and the strict limitation to immanence characteristic of a modernising theology which was heavily influenced by the norms and methodology of the social sciences. With regard to divine/spiritual power, Harnack appears to embrace both sides of the dichotomy of 'thing-in-itself versus instrumental relation', and of 'event within the human sphere versus event of supernatural origin'.

We have seen that for Mann power is an umbrella term for various modes of organisation; it is not in any way a thing in itself. Similarly Wrong stresses that power is not a property but a relation. Harnack is willing to journey a considerable way down this road. He recognises that the power of the gospel operates through describable psychological and social mechanisms, and he is prepared to explain in these terms how the interior powers enkindled by the gospel work. While he retains the use of 'power' as a noun, it is clear that what he indicates by it has the dynamic quality of a verb, better expressed by 'empowering'. In Dogmengeschichte and Mission und Ausbreitung he devotes considerable space to debunking the pretensions to supernatural origin of many so-called religious powers—the canon of scripture and the canonised creeds, dogma and ecclesiastical office. However, the influences of traditional Christianity and of his idealism were strong enough to ensure that for him divine/spiritual power retains both its transcendent origin and something of a reified, self-existent quality, like mana or Bergson's élan vital though less free-floating, for Harnack always locates it within persons, and it has its origin ultimately in the personality of God.

Social science has taught us much that Harnack did not appear to know. He had only a limited grasp of the tremendous formative power of socialisation, and of the effects upon thought and behaviour of impersonal organisations. However, his conviction that the highest forms of power were engendered within the individual and then had interpersonal and group effects may perhaps stand as a corrective to the mechanistic determinism which dominates much sociological theory.

Wrong's categories of authority are particularly helpful in illuminating the types of religious power which concerned Harnack (though we must bear in mind the exclusion from Wrong's work of intrapersonal power). The type of personal authority, and its sub-set of charismatic authority, 'fits' the figure of Jesus, though Wrong and Harnack would disagree as to the referent for this authority. Sociologically speaking, charismatic authority exists because it is attributed to the charismatic figure by followers, where from a theological point of view Jesus possessed an authority independent of such human attribution. Sociologists could not, for example, identify the betrayal and isolation of Jesus upon the cross as evidence of charismatic authority, where theologians, from their different point of view, unhesitatingly make the claim.

Wrong's types, and continuum, are also useful in providing a frame of reference for Harnack's view of what happened over time to the kinds of social power exercised by the church. It was the charismatic authority of Jesus which gave Christianity its initial impetus, and this, according to Harnack, was the type of power which characterised the 'apostles', i.e., the organisers and establishers of the first church communities. However, over time and in reaction to external and internal conflicts, the authority of church leadership moved up the scale of coercion, through the authority of competence to legitimate authority with the inducement of divine blessing (e.g. I Clement), and finally, from the development of the constantinian church (and according to Harnack, even before), to a fully-blown coercive authority, maintaining its claims to legitimacy but capable also of many forms of coercion, from excommunication to execution for heresy. And as one would expect from Wrong's typology, the increase in coercion was

concomitant with a decrease in cooperation and reciprocity between power actors and power subjects. The distinction between clergy and laity, originally only one of function, developed apace and acquired a religious significance, leaving the laity in a permanent state of religious dependence and immaturity in which the freedom and integrity of the individual was curtailed or destroyed.

Wrong's theories also suggest an explanation as to why the church allowed itself to go in this direction. He disagrees with Freud about the existence of an inherent will to be dominated, but holds that in many circumstances submission is a price worth paying for security and stability [Wrong, pp.120-121]. He also disagrees with theorists who hold that there is an innate will to power over others: power is usually a means to other ends, such as the material and prestige rewards it engenders, or a position of security in a hostile world [ibid. pp.218f]. This accords with Harnack's explanation that the increase in coercive social power which took place in the early Christian centuries was largely a self-protective response in the face of the insecurity engendered by gnosticism, by persecution and by other schisms. Other sources of insecurity included what Weber and Wrong describe as the need to solve the problem of succession [ibid. p.63]—how to replace the charismatic authority of Christ and the apostles—and the general waning of enthusiasm. But in addition to being a response to the pressures of historical events, Wrong's 'tendential laws' concerning the mutations of power over time parallel Harnack's convictions about a 'law of history' which indicates that religions decline rather than improve with age. We can conclude from Wrong that power changed within the church because that is what power does: and he especially emphasises the instability of personal authority [ibid. pp.75-82f].

Harnack's transpotentiation theme is but one version of the 'fall' theory for the explanation of the changes which came over Christianity in its first three centuries. We must bear in mind, however, that this is by no means the only explanation. Opposed to it, and fitting more comfortably into an optimistic view of providence, is the evolutionary or 'development' theory favoured by Newman and Loisy and defenders of the ecclesiastical status quo. If Harnack sticks to his position that the changes involved in early catholicism, however historically necessary, represented a fall for the gospel, he can only square it with his conviction that the Spirit of God guides and controls history by taking the very long view, and seeing the sad story of transpotentiation in the light of its happy ending (or at least the beginning of a happy ending) in the reformation. The inevitability of the process in Harnack's view also seems to war somewhat with his portrayal of it as a culpable fall.

In a Christian delineation of the working of divine/spiritual power, the treatment of redemption through Christ is of central significance. Harnack argues, as we saw in 'Christus als Erlöser', that the longing for redemption is the longing for freedom from 'nature' and for purity, peace and a holy life; that this longing is essentially universal; that redemption consists in the power to attain this freedom and this purity, and that the most drastic sacrifice is worthwhile in pursuit of this goal. Though such a sketch of the human need for redemption may ring a little strangely in

the ears, it differs from traditional presentations primarily in its shift from a description of objective states to a description of the subjective feelings which are, within the iron ring, the only evidence we have of these states. Where traditional theology speaks of original sin, Harnack speaks of the feelings of sin, bondage to the Lauf des Lebens, guilt, slavery to transitory things. Where traditional theology speaks of the longing for the state of righteousness before God, Harnack speaks of the feelings such a state would bring, the feelings of purity and peace. Similarly he looks at the whole question of redemption not so much from the perspective of the process, as does traditional theology, but rather in terms of the goal, which is the achievement of the moral life, the life with God, the Kingdom of God.

One wonders whether Harnack believed that there were actually objective states behind the subjective feelings. Harnack is certainly concerned not only for achieving the subjective feelings of purity and peace but also believes wholeheartedly in the objective existence of righteousness, of the ethical life, of life with God. With regard to redemption, however, this is somehow to put the question in the wrong way. Redemption, to Harnack, does not consist in a change of objective state or status, because objectively, that is, from God's point of view, no change is necessary. Harnack did not accept the idea of a God who classified some human beings as 'in sin' and others as 'justified'. God loves all and forgives all: redemption happens when human beings fully realise, understand, believe and accept that in spite of their sins, this is the case. Yet sin for Harnack remains a great and terrible reality, as is guilt, but he insists that it is from the human side only that the alienation from God proceeds, and it is a change in the subjective experience of the individual which can change this situation. This change is effected by witnessing the innocent, suffering love of the Holy One. Even the most objective-sounding categories of 'wrath' and the need for 'penalty' are interpreted in terms of the feelings and needs of human beings. Such an emphasis on the human and subjective has been objected to as anthropocentric arrogance, but in Harnack it is the product of his striving for epistemological honesty.

The heart of Harnack's atonement theory is the power paradox we have termed 'strength made perfect in weakness'. But does Harnack unpack this paradox which is so central to his concept of redemption? Aside from hints and pointers, the answer seems to be no: once again we are in the realm of holy mystery. In discussing the Greek reticence on this subject, he quotes Goethe, obviously with approval:

"...Goethe said towards the close of his life, 'We draw a veil over the sufferings of Christ simply because we revere them so deeply; we hold it to be reprehensible presumption to play and trifle with and embellish those profound mysteries in which the divine depths of suffering lie hidden, never to rest until even the noblest seems mean and tasteless'...It was reserved for the Middle Ages and our modern times to cast off all modesty and reverence here" [HD III p.306].

Harnack does offer us, however, some hints and pointers. We see some of the clearest in a passage in praise of Augustine. Harnack says of his christological thought that despite its limitations:

"...the true nature of Jesus Christ was really known: 'strength is made perfect in weakness'...That lowliness, suffering, shame, misery, and death are means of sanctification: nay, that selflessness and therefore ever suffering love is the only means of sanctification...that what is great and good always appears in a lowly state, and by the power of the contrast triumphs over pride; that humility alone has an eye wherewith to see the divine; that every feeling in the good is accompanied by the sense of being pardoned—that was the very core of Augustine's Christology" [HD V pp.132-133].

Great significance attaches to the phrase 'and by the power of the contrast triumphs over pride'. The power of the contrast appears to be an ideological power, engendering change in the emotions and will.

7.c. Difficulties in Harnack's approach

1. Problems with the inductive strategy

As Berger notes, the inductive model occupies the middle ground and is a position of compromise which is vulnerable and often transitory. Even if legitimate, its success may be precarious. Harnack recognised this, at least where the work of others was concerned. In a passage on the achievement of Paul, he maintains that in making the decisive break with Judaism Paul did what had to be done to safeguard Christianity from a persistent tendency in religion:

"...How often and often in the history of religion has there been a tendency to do away with some traditional form of doctrine or ritual which has ceased to satisfy inwardly, but to do away with it by giving it a new interpretation. The endeavour seems to be succeeding; the temper and the knowledge prevailing at the moment are favourable to it—when, lo and behold! the old meaning suddenly comes back again. The actual words of ritual, of the liturgy, of the official doctrine, prove stronger than anything else. If a new religious idea cannot manage to make a radical breach with the past at the critical point...and procure itself a new 'body', it cannot last...There is no tougher or more conservative fabric than a properly constituted religion; it can only yield to a higher phase by being abolished" [WC? p.175].

Harnack's theological work was largely taken up with offering a new interpretation of the traditional forms of Christian doctrine. He declined, however, to make a radical breach with the past, and the words quoted above could easily apply to the resurgence of the tradition in neo-orthodoxy which eclipsed his efforts.

One can, then, begin with an inductive approach and have it collapse back into a reaffirmation of tradition. Or the strategy's vulnerability can express itself in the other direction: one can start with induction and end up with reductionism. Berger offers as an example of this the strong tendency of nineteenth-century protestant liberals to identify the essence of Christianity with ethics or with the cultural achievements of western civilisation [Berger, pp.139-140]. He does, however, clear those he identifies as the greatest representatives of liberal protestantism—Schleiermacher, Ritschl and Harnack—of this accusation. He holds that while they all emphasise ethics as well as cultural achievements among the merits of Christianity, none of the three identified Christianity with ethics or culture [ibid. p.140].

Nevertheless it would appear that behind specific aspects of Harnack's thought there lies the tacit assumption, shared with the reductionist strategy, of the superiority of modern consciousness [see Berger pp.111-112]. Only such a conviction can explain the strenuous efforts of Harnack to make theology intellectually respectable in the universities, his insistence that he was a purely objective historian, and his extensive work, typified by What is Christianity?, to make the gospel accessible, intelligible and attractive to 'modern man' [see 1.d.].

Harnack's treatment of miraculous and supernatural phenomena certainly appears in danger of crossing the divide between induction and reduction, for the transcendent here is largely translated into phenomena of immanence. This translation is necessitated by Harnack's understanding of divine/spiritual power: miracles and eschatology are highly suspect because they can claim a sort of objectivity and thus threaten its pure inwardness. Berger warns us of where Harnack's approach in this matter, if taken to extremes, can lead. He insists that one cannot dispense with mythological language in religion, for without it one could not speak of the transcendent at all. To deny the ability of another reality to impinge upon ordinary human life is to invalidate all religious experience, and if this is done, one must completely cease to use religious language [Berger pp. 117-118]. Harnack does not, of course, deny that ability, but, with regard to the miraculous, he severely contains it. Harnack's dismissal of the obviously transcendent in favour of a carefully qualified inner transcendence could function as a staging-post towards dismissal of transcendence altogether.

In the end it is Harnack's christocentrism and his high doctrine of personality which save him from a 'nothing-but' reductionism. Jesus is at one and the same time objective and subjective, immanent and transcendent. His christocentrism also saves Harnack from one of what Berger terms the abiding problems of the inductive strategy, namely, the problem of certainty. Because in Christianity religious experiences may be validated by reference to an historical person, present to us not only in the Spirit (subjective experience) but also in the historical record (Harnack holds that the biblical witness to Jesus is in the main reliable as history), Christianity has a sort of permanent access to the wellsprings of religious experience.

11. The dualism of internal and external power

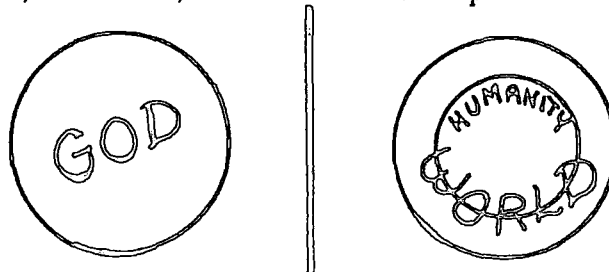
A key question which arises from Harnack's power analysis of history is how the divine/spiritual power he describes is related to ordinary human powers. The ambivalence on this subject in Harnack is exemplified in his two metaphors of the kernel and the husk, and the bark and the sap. The first is Harnack's well-known expression for the distinction between what in the early Christian preaching was zeitgeschichtlich and what was eternally valid. At many points, as we have seen, he appears to believe in the possibility of extracting the pure gospel from all of its earthly integuments, and hence in the possibility of experiencing pure divine/spiritual power. But repeatedly in History of Dogma he makes the opposing point that religion can never reach us except through historically conditioned forms. An example of this can be found in his comments about the growth of liturgical ritual and the clericalisation of the early church. He says of these developments that:

"...it was perhaps a misfortune that the forms of contemporary religion were assumed. But the misfortune was by no means irreparable. Like every living plant, religion only grows inside a bark. Distilled religion is not religion at all" [M&E I p.234].

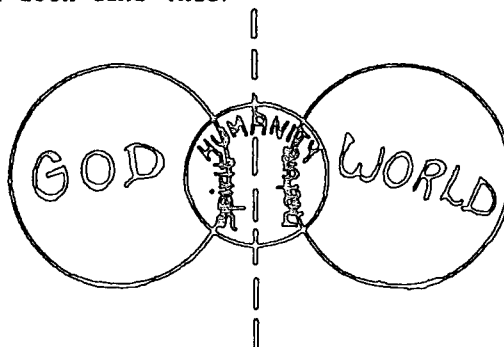
It would be reasonable to assume, on the basis of such a statement, that Harnack's position would be that divine/spiritual power was both experienced and communicated via the medium of ordinary human powers, yet often Harnack appears to insist on a 'pure spirituality' approach.

Harnack did not, it seems, intend to be a theoretical dualist. He states in Marcion that the human mind is so predisposed that as thinkers we can easily be either monists or pluralists, but that we cannot think as dualists without the risk of becoming mythological [Marcion, p.265], a risk from which his work was not immune.

At first glance one sees in Harnack's work a simple binary opposition between the divine/spiritual power of the gospel and human, worldly, powers of coercion, tradition, etc. One could represent it by the following diagram:



2. However, the dichotomy in Harnack is not actually so simple. The line of demarcation in fact runs right through the individual human being, and diagrammatically would look like this:



Harnack seeks to minimise the distance and difference between divine Spirit and human spirit. He sees them as related and as having the potential for deep communion, despite the 'fall', in contrast to the fundamental difference in kind and 'post-fall' alienation between God and nature. This view is clearly conditioned by Harnack's conception of nature, discussed above. Along with Ritschl, he used the term in a highly specialised sense to indicate the negative elements of finitude and futility, and thus quite rightly contrasted 'nature' in that sense to things spiritual. However, even when speaking of nature in the more conventional sense of the word, Harnack preserves a dualism in the interests of the 'higher', that is the inner, life, saying in terms that holiness cannot reveal itself in nature ['Christus als Erlöser, pp.88; see also ch. 4 above].

Drawing the line of demarcation in this manner protects Harnack's theodicy: God is no longer responsible for rebellious, corrupt nature, and God's absence from the world finds an explanation, while at the same time the human religious experience of God's presence is affirmed. And because the barrier between Geist and Natur is something of a semi-permeable membrane, God is in fact allowed influence in nature and the world via the human Geist.

The problem with this division is that it is based on the assumption of a strongly-marked dichotomy of nature and spirit within the human being, a dualism recognisable as far back as Plato but usually associated with the name of Descartes. Such a view of the composition of the human being was virtually self-evident to German idealism, and to Harnack standing in the idealist tradition'.

This dualism is not, however, self-evident to us today, and it is ironic from our vantage-point that one who was so strongly critical of the importation into Christianity of hellenistic philosophy should so wholeheartedly embrace one of its central tenets. The standard objections to Cartesian dualism seem to apply in Harnack's case. A principal objection must be that however useful it is for Harnack's apologetic, there is little evidence for such a neat compartmentalisation of the human being or of human powers into 'internal' and 'external' powers. Too many phenomena of human experience straddle the so-called boundary. To offer an example related to our subject, let us suppose that an individual has a transforming religious experience, an immediate and empowering sense of the presence and the love of God. This individual then vividly describes that experience to another person, who subsequently undergoes a similarly transforming experience of the love of God. We might wish to ask, in the terms of this investigation, what kind of power is operative in this transaction. On the one hand one could say that divine/spiritual power passed from the first individual to the second, like fire kindling fire. On the other hand one could equally say that the first person exercised a quite human charismatic authority and power of persuasion over the second. On Harnack's model, with its firm division of the spiritual from the worldly, one would have to choose one description and reject the other. I question whether this is necessary, whether the two options are in fact mutually exclusive. Certainly Peter and Paul, representatives in Harnack of the activity of divine/spiritual power to a high degree, were not above argument and vigorous persuasion as tools for the preaching of the gospel. The dualism perhaps creates as many problems as it solves.

Harnack's christology indeed attempts to break down the traditional, simple, dualism implied in the doctrine of the Incarnation, but his high doctrine of the human Geist over against a very negatively-conceived 'nature' actually reintroduces it by the back door. And from another point of view, we need to question Harnack's editing of the historical tradition about Jesus, in line with his dualism, to exclude Jesus' direct influence on the natural world.

This kind of dualism in Harnack explains why he viewed the transpotentiation of Christianity in such a strongly negative light. It is not only that it entailed the exchange of personal liberty for bondage, though that would be bad enough: it also represents a decline from the spirit into the flesh. This is why it is impossible for Harnack to conceive of a legitimate external authority in the church, even though he perceived the utility of having one. Similarly on this view sacraments can only be seen as a debasing of spiritual truth, or rather the false exaltation to spiritual realms of that which is merely natural.

Harnack's theological or metaphysical negativity towards human, worldly power seems uncharacteristic of his normal response to 'worldly' things. As his consistent rejection of asceticism demonstrates, he stood opposed to flight from the things of this world in favour of combatting sin and selfishness within the world. A view of human/social power which corresponded to this would, while maintaining its subordination to spiritual power, advocate its careful and responsible use both within the individual life and the life of the church. This theme does appear in Harnack [e.g.HD V pp.82f], but not wholeheartedly, and the force of his criticism in the opposite direction is such that a serious tension is created within his work. One result of this tension is the ambivalence in Harnack's handling of the very important question of the legitimate place of human power and authority within the life of the church.

iii. The possibility of a legitimate external authority for Christianity

Harnack's view of the legitimate place of external authority within the life of the church contains considerable tension. This is nicely encapsulated in a statement Harnack makes in Dogmengeschichte, and the footnote he appends to it. He writes:

"It is not a false view of religion that the restless quest of the soul only ceases when there has dawned upon it an authority whose validity is independent of the degree of strength with which its justification is felt *within the breast*" [HD V pp.82f].

However, the footnote qualifies this statement considerably by making the 'external authority', at least for spiritual persons, their own consciousness of the Divine Spirit. Harnack ends the qualification with a statement which further undermines the definitiveness of the external authority:

"...personal religion is not shown to be valueless by its being proved that its authorities are not sound...The important point is what the pious man has derived from his authorities" [HD V p.83 n.1].

While Harnack openly laments the passing-away of the demonstrations of abundant divine/spiritual power in the early Christian communities, his own opinions and actions with regard to church and power are much more in line with the state of affairs that took its place. His ethical and penitential views incline more towards the corpus permixtum than the exclusive community of saints, his eschatology towards the later doctrine of immortality and deification than chiliasm, and his scholarship towards learned exegesis and theological science rather than charismatic prophecy [see HD I pp.45-46]. Similarly his spirited indictments of the increasing worldliness of Christianity and his delineation of the costs of its growing rapport with secular learning in the first three centuries stand in glaring contrast to his own behaviour with regard to the relationship of church and world. A glance through his biography is sufficient to show that seldom has anyone done more to give the central teachings of Christianity influence in the world or to reconcile it with secular learning. The moderation of his judgment upon the third century, the 'pleas in mitigation', may stem from his conviction, apparent both from his academic and political activities and from his apologetic commitment to presenting Christianity in a way which was accessible to the modern mind, that some compromise with the world was vital for Christianity.

One feels a sense of contradiction. On the one hand he clearly deplored the church's transpotentiation—the enhancement and often complete replacement of divine/spiritual power by human forces such as tradition, authority, dogma, law and coercion [WC? pp. 213, 216]. His ideal is the purely spiritual religion, but he from time to time acknowledges that this can never appear on earth: yet by the tone of his enthusiastic descriptions of the earliest church he virtually identifies his ideal, as does Sohm, with the 'good old days' of the Urgemeinde. He does not, it is true, see this time as paradigmatic in every respect for Christianity, especially with regard to eschatology and the miraculous, stating in terms that Christianity has no classical period, not even the first. But it is clear that he does hold the Urgemeinde up in this light as regards a proper balance between inner/spiritual and external/human powers in the church. Harnack views protestantism as, since that time, the closest approximation to this ideal, rejoicing in the fact that in it at last the world possesses a purely spiritual religion, without externals in the form of priests, sacrifices or ceremonies. He attacks the 'political church' which wants to rule bodies, souls, consciences and goods, and which has adulterated its legitimate spiritual powers with those of the earth [WC? p. 103; see also WC? p.256/DW p.159].

One is keenly aware, however, that the author of these words remained throughout his life a member of the established state church. The colourful, impassioned language of his denunciations of the transpotentiation of the early church would lead one to believe that this would be an intolerable position for Harnack, even though he stops well short of Sohm or Tolstoy in the strength of his protests. But while strongly opposing the alliance of the church with any particular political party, with the catholic Centre Party in mind ['Protestantismus und

Katholizismus in Deutschland' R&A nf.1,p.2471), he argued against the strict separation of church and state on the grounds that it would result in a moral loss to the nation and to the isolation of the churches from each other and from the wider community. He seems to be arguing for the educative function of the church within the nation in the same way that he found value in catholicism for training up the barbarian and semi-barbarian pagans into higher ways, that is, as a preparation for and a safeguarding of the gospel [HD VI p.6].

But Harnack goes beyond allowing the church a legitimate role in educating and influencing the secular world to admit that human powers have a legitimate role within the church. As we have seen, he maintained, despite his negative attitude to any continuing influence for dogma, that the living gospel nowhere appears nor can appear without a protective 'bark' of form and organisation [see WC? 11, 176, 220].

Given his admission that some kind of external authority is necessary in religion, and having rejected the authoritativeness of all the external authorities of the catholic settlement, what does he propose by way of an alternative? Beyond the broadest outlines, he was either unwilling or unable to suggest an appropriate alternative authority, form or organisation for evangelical faith. Once again we experience the sense of closure involved in his statement 'Ich bin kein Reformator'.

His work does, however, offer us hints and an indication of a general way of proceeding, which suggest the following directions. In the first place, and it is the thing we can be most sure of, Harnack would want to redress the balance between internal and external authority. All external authority for him is contingent. Whatever objective authorities imposed themselves or seemed necessary in the course of time, could, in Harnack's view, only supplement and never substitute for the inner authority of the gospel. Divine/spiritual power, when experienced personally, is self-authenticating and needs no props. Were Christians to cultivate their receptivity to this power, they would become free of the psychological state of half-doubt and half-religion which seeks a resting-place in external authority. Thus the psychological drive which creates authority would diminish, and Christian communities would be in a better position to resist the pressures of institutionalisation and to function either without recourse to external authority or with that external authority held firmly in check.

Harnack's writings themselves can take us this far, and we can, perhaps, find a few more clues in his life. His own attitude to the authority of the church, when it conflicted with the subjective authority of his conscience, was to obey the latter: he quite clearly subordinated external to internal authority. So far as he could be within the constraints of the 'mandarin' tradition, he was a defender of academic freedom. And as recorded in the biography, the reasons for his support of his Landeskirche's proposed Spruchkollegium, which surprised many, also illuminate our subject. He supported the idea of a committee of experts which would investigate cases of doctrinal aberration among the clergy because he believed that a clear expression of the Christian faith was indeed important, but also that the matter should be separated from disciplinary proceedings and handled on the basis of the issues in a

moderate and respectful manner [AZH pp.391-395]. In all of this we can see his moving away in practice from an 'authoritarian' style of ecclesiastical authority to one which, while concerned to safeguard the clarity and purity of the teaching of the church, allowed the widest possible latitude to conscience.

We are also, perhaps, entitled to make some deductions on the subject from Harnack's work which he himself did not make. It could be argued, for instance, that Harnack does already possess an external authority in his conception of history, and that history ends up replacing dogma in Harnack's scheme as the definitive criterion of truth. Tacitly he puts forward history, in the particularly evaluative form which he felt was its highest expression, and theology, insofar as it was a true theologia crucis, as appropriate external authorities for evangelical faith, and in the process, as we shall discuss, accords to historical theologians considerable power. One need attribute to him, however, no particularly sinister motives for this. It appears that his primary motive was once again to place the historical Jesus in control of theology and church. Jesus in the end is the only external authority Harnack can recognise as legitimate. He is not only the chief vehicle for inner, divine/spiritual power: as a concrete historical figure who taught, acted and influenced, he was the original external authority for the Christian community, from whom all other external authorities in the church felt or claimed themselves to be derived. Harnack's desire, however impossible of fulfillment in practice, was to see him in that position once again, and he viewed historically-conditioned theology as the means for attaining that goal.

iv. The authority of the historical theologian

We have noted how in the eyes of many critics Harnack appears to be caught between his conviction that the divine/spiritual power available through the gospel is self-authenticating and requires no additional bolstering by external authority, and his historical observation and nagging personal instinct that some external authority in religion—even in Christianity—is necessary. The passage in which Harnack expresses his opinion concerning Luther's inadequate grasp of history reveals much to us about Harnack's own high estimate of it, and the functional role history played in his constructive theology as a legitimate external authority. He writes of Luther that:

"...he had altogether as little understanding of history as the majority of his contemporaries had. History in the highest sense of the word was for him a closed book. He showed no perception either of the relativity of the historical or of the growth and progress of knowledge within history. How could it be possible under such circumstances to ascertain accurately what Scripture contains as a historical record? But how can a *pure* form of expression for the essence of Christianity be expected if this condition is not fulfilled?" [HD VII p.234].

This is a revealing passage in many ways. It shows us once again Harnack's desire to go much further than Luther's good beginning in

reversing transpotentiation, in clearing away the external authorities handed down from the catholic settlement by relativising their authority and nullifying its claim to be a religious power, and in restoring priority to the divine/spiritual power released through the gospel [see HD VII p.238]. In it we also discover Harnack tacitly laying the foundations for the authority of history--a history which is sophisticated enough to discriminate within the source documents and discern what in them constitutes an 'accurate historical record'. Harnack's emphasis on the 'growth and progress of knowledge' constitutes a broad hint that a taking on board of his epistemology would also improve on Luther's beginnings. Yet, as we shall see below, the charge of oblivion to historical relativity would soon be laid at Harnack's own door.

Furthermore, in accordance with his conviction that external authority to be maximally effective must be vested in persons rather than books or dogmas, Harnack at points seems to infer that the traditional authority of the bishop to interpret dogma finds a parallel in the authority of the historical theologian to interpret history. He acknowledges that the position of church historian is one which involves the exercise of external, 'political' power in the article 'Über die jüngsten Entdeckungen auf dem Gebiete der Ältesten Kirchengeschichte' quoted in *l.d.*, reminding us that church historians end up, by virtue of the results of their work, becoming church politicians whether they wish to or not [R&A bd.I pp. 315-316]. Harnack always insisted that we study history in order to intervene in history. His desire was to use for good the power which he thus admitted to possessing--to fulfill his vocation of the laying of the groundwork for the completion of the reformation.

Wrong's descriptions of the legitimations of authority shed light on the methodological strategy of Harnack's own quiet claim to power. This is based on the authority of competence, his position being that historical theologians have the right to determine what original Christianity was and what the essence of Christianity is because they alone are competent to handle and evaluate the source materials. At the same time Harnack's historical work undercuts the claims to legitimacy of all the traditional external authorities in Christianity, such as canon, creed, cultus and episcopacy, leaving the field clear, in Harnack's terms, for the integrity of the individual in the first instance, but also for the authority of the expert.

Thus Harnack, though certainly not, in his generation, Harnack alone, makes the claim for critical history as a legitimate external authority for Christianity, and equally for a theology which is a 'true theologia crucis'. The replacement of the authority of a rather murky 'apostolic' tradition with the authority of historically-conditioned theology may constitute an advance for truth, though perhaps a very vulnerable and precarious one. But with regard to the position for theology which he is here supporting, Harnack does not go into sufficient detail to answer the many questions to which it gives rise, such as how theology can be 'the decisive power' in the church without becoming dogmatic and authoritarian, and of what, precisely, does the true theologia crucis consist. The one safeguard which he does impose is his insistence on the contingency and fallibility of any theological productions, and the necessity for the central theological task of expressing the gospel to be continuously redone. But in the midst of

the paean to inner freedom which is Harnack's description of the reformation, we see the danger, in his elevation of theology—allied with 'history in the highest sense of the word'—of a new bondage to externals and a new dependence upon professionals, though of a characteristically protestant kind, and a new human power seeking the hallowing of religion. This was far from Harnack's intention, but so highly did he esteem the task of theology that he may have been somewhat blind to its dangers.

v. Harnack's concept of history

It is also worth remembering that while Harnack placed history in a position of great authority for Christianity, his own view of history was characterised by several questionable assumptions. The principle weaknesses in Harnack's attitude to history are well known. Chief among them is his assertion of the possibility of objectivity on the part of the historian, while at the same time insisting on the right and duty of historians to exercise a 'royal judging function' with regard to the selection and weighting of what history to present. Though Harnack was far from simplistic in this matter, we have become still more sceptical about the possibility of extracting from the source documents an 'accurate historical record', and even about the possibility, given our distance historically and epistemologically from the texts, of truly understanding the accurate historical record if we could arrive at it. Yet to Harnack, possession of a clear grasp of history 'in the highest sense of the word' was the essential tool by which his generation was competent to continue the theological work which the reformation began. Harnack also seemed unaware that his convictions concerning the unchangingness of the core of Christianity, and of the overall purpose and order of the historical process, were not historical observations but statements of faith. His choice, when assessing the significance of historical persons or events, to stress what was unique in them rather than what was characteristic of the time, also is open to objection.

Harnack has always earned criticism for his championing of an approach to historical phenomena which attempts to isolate and present the essence of the matter. Kaltenborn notes that towards the end of his life Harnack had at least some second thoughts about the use of the term 'essence', and mentioned in a letter to a former pupil that he saw now that he should simply have called Das Wesen 'Introduction to Christianity' [Kaltenborn, p.58]. Loisy, Cremer, Troeltsch and many others have pointed out the difficulty, when assessing Christianity, of determining legitimate criteria for making such a selection. Troeltsch was able to face more squarely the inescapable subjectivism of any treatment of history. In the end, though, all theological presentations, however committed to presenting 'the whole gospel', represent a selection from the tradition according to personally-chosen criteria, so in some sense an essencing procedure, however regrettable, is inevitable. If Harnack is at fault in this matter it is in his misplaced self-confidence in practising openly what all theologians do covertly, and in the naivete of seeing a necessity as a virtue.

vi. Harnack's treatment of miracles, eschatology and sacraments

Harnack's treatment of these subjects forms one of the most ambivalent and least satisfactory parts of his theology. He appears to be in a state of some contradiction over the enthusiastic nature of the earliest Christians, with their miracles and chiliastic expectations. He strongly desires to endorse the spiritual force, freshness and moral energy which were demonstrated by the early church, empowered as it was by 'the Spirit': he openly and strongly regrets the passing of that time and the decay into something much more tame and mediocre. But on the other hand he cannot see the supernatural phenomena which characterised the early church as being what they claimed to be, or as being intrinsically valuable. He clearly believes that it is possible to possess the joy in God, the vigour and utter confidence which the early Christians knew without possessing, or being possessed by, these phenomena, and he divides the former from the latter with his idea of a dual conception of 'the Spirit' in the New Testament.

All of this has consequences for his portrayal of divine/spiritual power. Most understandings of Christianity include both the 'quiet peaceful element' and the 'supernatural' in their notion of divine/spiritual power, whereas Harnack makes both a distinction and a clear choice. Yet as an historian he must have observed how frequently, particularly at the inception of a new religious movement, the two things are found together. How did he explain that? Possibly only by reference to the consistent inability of a flawed humanity to think about spiritual things except in the language of metaphor. Other explanations are possible, however. Harnack admits that a supernatural or miraculous mode of understanding divine power is likely to persist as long as religion itself. In view of its perennial nature, his consignment of all miraculous and supernatural phenomena to the realms of legend, psychology or natural forces may arguably do less than justice to this persistent aspect of religious experience.

We also find in Harnack now and then hints of an unwillingness or inability, despite his epistemological convictions, completely to let go of the supernatural interpretation of Christianity. He can still occasionally speak of God's power to compel nature and our ability to move that power by prayer, and he can claim that there has seldom been a strong faith which has not drawn from history the conclusion that Jesus possessed supernatural power. We also bear in mind his consistent affirmation that God is the Lord of history, that is, the ultimate determiner of the external world. Is God's method of operation in this world strictly confined to the inspiration and empowerment of human personalities? The confidence with which Harnack usually answers in the affirmative seems unfounded.

We also need to examine the manner in which Harnack addresses the question of the boundaries of what is known and what is possible. One way in which Harnack handles the problem of the supernatural offers a parallel to his category of holy mystery. We see him in this context asserting the incompleteness of our knowledge of the forces pertaining to matter and the even greater incompleteness of our knowledge of 'psychic' forces, which means that we cannot in the end set a sure boundary between

the possible and the impossible. He similarly maintains that many of the phenomena associated with demonic possession are inexplicable. This admission of incomplete knowledge enables Harnack to judge at least some of the miraculous events reported in scripture and other early Christian texts to be genuine—not miraculous in the sense of violating the laws of nature, but certainly wonderful and, at the moment, inexplicable in their obedience to natural and psychological laws as yet unknown. In this manner, as Kaltenborn reports Franz Mehring to have said, Harnack leaves, if not actual doors for miracles, at least a few mouseholes [Kaltenborn p.42].

Kaltenborn himself is impatient with Harnack's 'mouseholes'. He labels as pre-Christian Harnack's fundamental assumption that the Naturzusammenhang cannot be broken into [Kaltenborn p.42]. In his view one should either, on the basis of a 'strong' christology, speak unashamedly of miracles, or reject them altogether. Certainly Kaltenborn's higher christology means that he has no difficulty with the miraculous, but it seems more than a little subjective to write off Harnack's differing conclusions as pre-Christian. He also insists that the job of determining the boundaries of what is possible belongs not to theology at all, but to the sciences [ibid.]. In any event, Harnack's emphasis on our ignorance of the boundaries of what is possible sits rather oddly and uncomfortably with the self-confidence and consistency with which he applies the epistemological principle of the iron ring. The compromise hypothesis of explaining the ostensibly miraculous via still-unknown laws of nature has the rather unsatisfying effect of interspersing the iron with elastic.

Harnack certainly appears to have no feeling for the sacramental as such, as Neufeld and other critics have remarked, though he is quick to grasp the external, social power consequences for the laity of the catholic development of the sacraments. To him this development represents the materialising of the spiritual and the objectifying of the relational. It is a perversion of the original symbolic activities, and a continuing hindrance to the church. Neufeld connects Harnack's negative attitude toward the sacraments with his understanding of 'nature', without appreciating that Harnack's negative pronouncements about 'nature' are not reflections on the goodness or otherwise of created things. Harnack was an unabashed lover of the material creation, but in its own sphere: he could not see in it a vehicle for the divine, the only possible vehicle for the divine within the iron ring was the human personality. Harnack's distaste for sacraments, conceived as means of objective grace, is rooted in his conviction that grace is personal and relational. His treatment of the sacramental feels simplistic, very black and white and either/or, and for that reason unsatisfying: more recent work on the meaning of symbol offers more adequate perspectives for assessment.

Harnack's spirituality was strongly conditioned by the Lutheran doctrine of vocation in the world, and he disliked and distrusted anything which proved a distraction from the Christian's task, in the world, of love and service. Eschatology and mysticism alike are, in his eyes, distractions from this simple but profound vocation. Mysticism is particularly reprehensible to Harnack because it attempts at a far subtler level than eschatology or sacrament to materialise and sensualise the spiritual, and has the character of hubris in its attempts to escape from the iron ring. We were

not, in Harnack's view, meant to storm heaven, but to live on earth in patient trust and loving activity. His criticism, no doubt in some cases justified, that mysticism seeks proximity to the divine without moral regeneration, is, however, unjust to the great majority of mystical writers for whom a holy life rather than any visionary experience is the criterion of authenticity.

Harnack writing on mysticism and 'superstition' is not Harnack at his best. One feels too much the weight of the anti-Orthodox and anti-Catholic outlook which was inevitable for a protestant theologian of his time, even though Harnack held it in a distinctly moderate form when compared to others. It renders him incapable of reading the texts with sympathy, and prevents him from discerning the not inconsiderable similarities between his own piety and that of the mystic. Both were individualist, and both placed a premium upon a living experience of the living God. Both were seeking escapes, and escapes which were similar—mysticism, from the limitations of normal human perception in order to find reassurance of the truth of the realities proclaimed in the Christian faith; Harnack, from the enslaving chains of 'nature' and finitude, in order to dwell in the assurance of meaning and eternal divine reality which Jesus preached. Harnack rightly noted that tendency in mysticism which would make religion a substitute for and diversion from morality rather than the source of its energy. But the opposition he draws between mysticism's seeking experience as a way to faith, and his insistence that faith comes first and is the ground of experience, feels overdrawn and part of a rather stock protestant response to anything catholic. Meijering suggests that Harnack's is a typically reformed view of mysticism, adding that if one, in contrast to this view, allows for the grace of God outside of the historical revelation in Christ, one can take a more positive view of it [Meijering (1978) pp.84f].

These 'supernatural' phenomena have proved very persistent in human religious history. They recur in the life of Christ and of the church, and are clearly power events of some kind. They do not accord well with Harnack's conviction that divine/spiritual power is an inner matter, and they pose a threat to his understanding of Christianity and to his apologetic theodicy. He attempts to dispose of them by explaining them to be non-supernatural occurrences and by downplaying their significance, asserting that as they have to do only with the transient material world they are of only secondary value in any event. I would hold that they may be matters of more than marginal theological significance, and if there is a chance of their being what they claim to be, then Harnack's power theology and theodicy, despite its considerable virtues of consistency and plausibility, would require alteration.

vii. Integrating the historical Jesus with absolute religion

One question which remains unresolved in Harnack's christology is whether Jesus' revelation and action are definitive of reality in a causal sense, as orthodox tradition would hold, or whether they are rather the supreme illustration of universal truth. Kaltenborn claims that universal religion is Harnack's starting-point, with Jesus as its highest expression

[Kaltenborn, pp.44, 125-126], and offers as an example Harnack's description of the cross as an expression of the fact that the suffering of the righteous is salvation in history [Kaltenborn pp.44-45]. He contrasts this with Bonhoeffer's approach in which Jesus, not universal religion, is the starting-point, and where he is not so much 'die Wirklichkeit' as 'der Wirklichen' [ibid. pp.125-126]. Kaltenborn blames Harnack's idealism for his stance, but could not the cause also lie in his faithfulness to his understanding of history? On historical grounds Harnack could not accept the orthodox understanding of pre-existence, and on that basis, because of his relatively late arrival on the stage of history, Jesus would have to be seen as illustrative rather than causal or definitive of reality. Harnack is clearly influenced by idealism and uses the phrase 'universal religion' frequently, as one would expect of an apologetically orientated theologian of his time. But he also assented to the fundamental biblical notion of God the Father, who rules history and who can do genuinely new things in history. Harnack swings back and forth between these two notions, as is illustrated by his doctrine of redemption, which now is the revelation to alienated human beings of their true and eternal condition as the children of God, and now is a 'real' change in situation, effected by the penal suffering of Christ.

Harnack frequently states that Christianity is not one positive religion among many or even the highest religion, but is in fact religion itself, yet he is forced by his christology to qualify this statement. He affirms that the peculiar character of the Christian religion is that every reference to God is at the same time a reference to Jesus Christ and vice versa, and in this sense the person of Christ is the central point of the religion and inseparably united with the substance of piety as a sure reliance on God. Harnack denies that this is to intrude a foreign, 'positive' element into the pure essence of religion, and he quotes Wilhelm Herrmann in stating that the reverence for persons, the inner bowing before the manifestations of moral power and goodness is the root of all true religion [HD I p.72]. It is true, though, that Christianity knows only one name before which it bows: "In this rests its positive character; in all else, as piety, it is by its strictly spiritual and inward attitude, not a positive religion alongside of others, but religion itself" [HD I p.72]. Harnack resolves Lessing's dilemma, with regard to Jesus, by asserting that in him what appear to be the accidental truths of history turn out in fact to be the necessary truths of reason [Rumscheidt, p.69f].

The weakness in Harnack's argument for Jesus' uniqueness in 'Christus als Erlöser' lies firstly in his claim that the assertions he makes in this direction are historical facts. It is true that Christianity has always judged Jesus to be unique, but that there is indisputable evidence that his claim is justified cannot be simply stated as fact. The assertion that Jesus was the last prophet is also problematic: the judgment as to who is a true and who a false prophet is hardly a question of historical fact, unless one pushes the 'royal judging function' to its very limit. And if it is a limitation on their uniqueness that most prophetic figures since Jesus have been indebted to him, how does Harnack evaluate the fact that Jesus was dependent upon earlier prophets? The third assertion—that where other prophets appealed to only a limited circle at a specific time, Jesus is the prophet for a vast number and for endless generations—is also problematic. The popularity of Mohammed, who fulfils most of the

criteria for a prophet, demonstrates that Jesus is not unique in possessing widespread appeal. While it is true that Jesus has outlasted most prophets in influence over time, it is simply impossible to ascertain whether or not he is the prophet for an 'endless epoch'. These are perhaps legitimate arguments of faith, but certainly not historical facts.

The fourth assertion in 'Christus als Erlöser', that Jesus brought the perfect consciousness of God, over against the partial and contradictory God-consciousness of previous prophets, similarly cannot be proven in any historical or objective sense, but does appear to be true from the standpoint of a Christian theology. The fifth assertion, that in Jesus, unlike previous prophets, there was no contradiction between his perceptions and his actions, does appear plausible from the evidence we possess. These five assertions, together with Harnack's delineation of Jesus' role as redeemer, form the core of his argument for the uniqueness of Jesus. What is clear to us is that it remains an argument, and is not, as Harnack would have us believe, a demonstration.

The answer which it suggests to the question of how the historical Jesus fits into 'absolute religion' is to grant him uniqueness in the sense of having reached the pinnacle of development of a human religious role (i.e. prophet and redeemer) which already existed before his time. Jesus in Harnack's view represents a 'quantum leap' for religion, but in directions consonant with and already determined by absolute, universal religion. Yet there are elements in his atonement theory which pull in the opposite direction, arguing for the utter novelty of Jesus' saving work.

viii. The place of the cross in Harnack's system

On the basis of 'Christus als Erlöser' it appears that Harnack has not managed, in spite of his attempts to do so, to integrate the cross into his system. He holds staunchly to the importance of Christ's suffering and death and to the idea that they were effective for the forgiveness of sins—he has too much respect for Christian history and for what he terms the religious experience of the most mature Christians to do otherwise. But his treatment of the cross hangs on the end of 'Christus als Erlöser' like an afterthought, veiled by a curtain of mystery. His treatment in other books, with its assertion of the redemptive value of penal suffering, certainly goes much further towards affording the cross an integral place, but it is still somewhat unsatisfactory. Harnack's emphasis on a 'real' redemption and on penal suffering does not fit seamlessly into his usual psychological mode of thought. It is certainly in keeping that he does not see this suffering as a satisfaction of God's honour, but as the awesome price God was prepared to pay to liberate us from the destructive powers of sin and guilt, but Harnack's continuing use of terms like 'wrath' and 'penalty' indicates that he has not totally dismissed the first conception. Furthermore, the interpretations of wrath and penalty which he advances are rather impersonal, with sin and guilt as destructive forces, virtually outside of any particular person and independent of God, on a par with the laws of physics. This does not harmonise with a mode of theological thought which is intentionally personal and relational rather than 'objective'. It has a rather mythological feel, which is surely not what

Harnack intended. What goes a long way, however, towards saving the integrity of his thought is the psychological manner in which he perceives penalty. We see this when he criticises Abelard:

"...he has not clearly perceived that *that love* is the highest, is indeed alone effectual, which, by taking the *penalty* upon itself, reveals at the same time the greatness of the absolution *and the greatness of the cancelled guilt*. He did not perceive that the sinner cannot be otherwise delivered from guilt than by experiencing and seeing the penalty of guilt" [HD VI p.79].

Harnack seems in the end undecided as to whether the cross of Christ was something absolutely unique in human history or whether it stood, as a superlative example, 'like all crosses which stand in the service of the brother', but he appears to incline toward the latter view. Harnack's inductive strategy and his apologetic interest combine to lead him to seek analogies and parallels for the events of Jesus' experience in the common experiences and history of humanity. His 'high' anthropology causes him, in any event, to minimise any sense of radical disjunction between the human and the divine. Thus recognising the points of similarity and contact between Jesus' work and that of others is not, in Harnack, to minimise or denigrate the work of Jesus, but to elevate and ennoble the human strivings in the same direction—not to bring Christ down, but to raise humanity up. The danger of this approach is that of compromising both Jesus' uniqueness, and, by extension, his centrality to the faith that bears his name, both of which are fundamental to the tradition.

ix. The category of holy mystery

A further difficulty with Harnack's christology concerns the evaluation of his category of 'holy mystery', which crops up in various forms throughout his work. As we have seen in chapter six, he refuses to speculate upon the 'how' of the resurrection and the indwelling of Christ in the believer, and he just as firmly refuses to try to explain how it can be that Christ's death on the cross could be 'for sinners', beyond the assertion that the death of the Holy One, along with his word, life and continuing presence, is singularly effective in convincing sinners of the fact of forgiving love. We have seen also his distaste for inquisitiveness into the sufferings of Christ.

On the one hand it cannot but be a virtue to remain silent where one has no information, and Harnack as an historian of dogma knew only too well the knots and difficulties into which speculation about the resurrection and the atonement has led the churches through the centuries. Often theologians, when confronted with contradictory or insufficient evidence, have been tempted to stretch the evidence and make more positive statements than are warranted. It is refreshing that in such circumstances Harnack usually acknowledges the state of the evidence in a straightforward manner before, perhaps, tendering what is clearly stated to be an opinion. This characterises his academic work as a whole, and one can see that his treatment of 'holy mysteries' is consistent with it. It is, however, frustrating that Harnack, with his insistence on the

importance of clear thought and expression, should thus decline to push this thought and expression into very sensitive areas, and one cannot help the suspicion that the strategy is useful for getting him out of tight spots. It does seem inconsistent that someone who was publicly committed to a liberal spirit of free enquiry in theology should hedge round particularly important theological questions with impenetrable barriers.

x. Unchallenged assumptions in Harnack's work

If it is a crime to make a priori assumptions, then all must plead guilty. But when evaluating intellectual work, it is necessary to expose the unchallenged assumptions inherent in it as clearly as possible. Perhaps Harnack's most famous unchallenged assumption was that he was doing objective history—that it was possible for anyone to do objective history—followed by his assumption that the historical process had both meaning and a goal. He also declines, or more probably could imagine no need to explain, one of the truisms of his view of religion, which was that in religious matters it is what is simplest which is most powerful [see ch. 3.b.].

Harnack's view concerning 'holy mysteries' affords another example. Similar to this is his conviction that how Jesus reached the consciousness of his unique power and vocation is his secret, which no psychology will ever fathom [WC? p.128]. And again we see that while Harnack based his belief in the resurrection not on the veracity of stories about the empty tomb but upon the overwhelming conviction of the earliest disciples, he does not explain how it was that they reached that conviction [see ch. 5.b.].

xi. The causal roles of idea and personality

A summary of Harnack's theory of divine/spiritual power, but employing sociological terminology, would be that divine/spiritual power empowers human beings via the operation of charismatic and competent authority predicated upon what Rollo May terms nutrient power, which is attributed to (Feuerbach and Durkheim would say, projected upon) the character of God. The effect of coming to accept the legitimacy claims of this authority—that is, the charismatic and competent authority of the personality of Christ—and concomitantly its estimate of the character of God, is the empowering of the individual, i.e. the production of marked beneficial effects upon that person's emotional and ethical states, giving rise to beneficial activity. Inbuilt, as we can see, into this analysis of how divine/spiritual power works is a very high estimate of the empowering possibilities of ideas, and the empowering influence of personalities.

What the world will no longer accept uncritically is the conviction that ideas, and the personalities shaped by ideas, have that primary causal role. Mann's point that ideological power could only become dominant when certain infrastructures (literacy and long-distance communications) and certain attitudes (the unity of humankind) had been generated by economic, political and military circumstances (such as the long-distance trade and

cultural intermingling which were the result of large empires) suggests that powerful ideas, though truly powerful, are as much effects as causes. Sociologists would argue that the same is true of great personalities. Harnack himself, as Irsmscher points out, was instrumental, in spite of his 'great man' theory, in shifting the emphasis away from the individual and focussing on the role of institutions in the shaping of history [Irsmscher p.13]. The balance indeed may now have swung too far: if Harnack's view of the causality of ideas and personalities in history was one-sided and simplistic, so is any theory which strictly subordinates ideological power and the role of outstanding individuals to economic, political, or social power and the role of non-personal institutions. This is perhaps especially true when the subject under discussion is religion.

xii. The possibility of a religious significance for the church

A further question which must be put to Harnack concerning the theory of transpotentiation is what, for him, the church, as an institution dedicated to the promulgation of divine/spiritual power but existing in the external world, can possibly mean. Ideological power for Harnack was individual and rooted in true transcendence. In contrast, ideological power for Mann is corporate and rooted in social transcendence. Both can appreciate that the ecumene has value; for Harnack it is a band of individual believers and its value lies in supporting them as individuals, where for Mann it is the essence of religion, the 'social home' within the universe for which all people long. Neither writer has, however, managed to reach an understanding of religious corporateness which can accord it any religious, or true-transcendent, significance. As we noted in i.d. above, Harnack did possess a practical and pragmatic interest in ecclesiology, a vision, though not perhaps very clear or specific, of what the church should be doing. This included even the formulation of a plan of first steps towards reconciliation and possible reunification between the protestant and catholic churches ['Protestantismus und Katholizismus in Deutschland' R&A nf.1. pp.225f]. But what he lacked was a theological estimate of what the church is. The church as 'the body of Christ' hardly figures in Harnack's writings, and remained for him an ideological construct, the societas fidei, with no direct relation to any concrete ecclesiastical body or bodies. In an attitude which he identified as typically protestant, he recognised the practical necessity of visible ecclesial communities, but insisted that they were practical contingencies only: "...we do not hang our hearts upon them" [WC? p.276].

Harnack seems unable to accord the church any religious significance at all, for the basic religious unit to him is the individual—"God and the soul; the soul and its God". Because of his understanding of power, any human collectivity assembled in the name of religion must be at least slightly suspect, for it will inevitably generate and utilise external, social power and, because of its eternal goal, unless it is extremely careful, it will end up legitimating and absolutising that power by claiming divine sanction for it. Harnack has a clear vision of the task of Christianity in the modern world, but can offer little in the way of guidance for the formation, or reformation, of the corporate vehicle of that mission. To say this is not merely to take issue with Neufeld and

insist that Harnack did not possess anything remotely well enough organised to be called a Kirchenprogramm. It is also to insist that Harnack was unwilling or unable to offer future generations any meaning for 'church' beyond that of a sociological collectivity with a common ideological goal. It would seem that he did, after all, hold firmly to his understanding of his vocation, that is, the renewal of theology, and left the renewal of the church, even at a theoretical level, to succeeding generations.

7.d. The merits of Harnack's system

Too often in the past, assessments of Harnack's work have focussed exclusively on its deficiencies and ignored or taken for granted its merits. Döbertin, however, as we noted in 1.d., affirms Harnack's continuing significance for the fields of education, politics and theology. Harnack's particular contributions to theology he summarises as establishing the validity of the quest for meaning, the centrality of Jesus, the contingency and alterability of all historical relations, and the value, for social and political activity, of a sense of allegiance and responsibility to transcendent reality. Something of my own estimation of Harnack's merits has been indicated in the introduction to this chapter. One would further wish to augment Döbertin's conclusions by indicating that Harnack's 'system' is more coherent and less reductionist than previous studies have indicated. As Harnack is widely held to be the representative figure of liberal protestantism, it follows that a reassessment of Harnack must lead also to a reassessment of liberalism, acknowledging its continued strong allegiance to the transcendent and cancelling or mitigating the charge that it reduces Christianity to ethics and aesthetics.

This will serve as a general survey of Harnack's achievements, but it is necessary to express more specifically the value of Harnack's constructive theology, especially as it relates to the theme of power.

While Harnack's dualism of internal and external power may be seen as a simplistic overschematisation, the same should not be said of his theory of the transpotentiation of Christianity. It is true that the basic thesis is simple, i.e., the observation that as the inner, spiritual energy of Christianity diminished, the external, temporal power of the church increased. But Harnack demonstrates great sophistication in the way he links the two facts. Though some causality is implied, he does not draw a straightforward causal connexion between the decline of divine/spiritual power and the rise of ecclesiastical might, but rather describes the complex interplay of factors which led to this result. His clearheadedness and evenhandedness in the analysis of something about which he had very strong convictions can indeed serve as a model for the future.

Regardless of whether or not one agrees with his analysis completely, Harnack's well-documented critique of the growth and misuse of ecclesiastical power still stands, and still needs to be addressed. The critique itself, in its broad outlines, is not new—anabaptists and other sectarians have been making it at least since the reformation. What is new is the formidable scholarship with which it is substantiated, the fact

that is is being made by a member of an established state church, and that its critique of ecclesiasticism is not aimed exclusively at Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. The critique functions as a lasting warning against the dangers of idolatry, of investing, however innocently, the contingent human structures of ecclesiastical power with the lustre of the divine.

But it is not exclusively, or even primarily, with regard to ecclesiastical power that Harnack makes his greatest contribution. This lies in his courageous attempt to articulate the meaning and method of divine/spiritual power in terms of inductive human experience. The use of the inductive strategy, and the concentration on the power, or more correctly, on the empowering quality, of the gospel in relational and psychological terms constituted and still constitutes an extremely plausible, accessible and attractive apologetic. Harnack, unlike many others, is speaking 'in a language understood of the people'. While, and in some cases regrettably, jettisoning as excess baggage much which has been prized by orthodox Christianity, he performs an important service in focussing on the central doctrinal tenets of the faith and making them comprehensible in existential terms. This existential emphasis acts as a valuable corrective to the overemphasis on intellectualised dogmatism which is perhaps the besetting sin of European protestants. Harnack again and again serves to remind us that Christianity is simple, and to remind us of the magnitude and profundity of the simple truths it proclaims—God as the loving Father of humanity, who is both Judge and Redeemer in and through Jesus Christ. True religion, he says, is as simple and transparent as it is alien and absolutely paradoxical [Marcion, p.17]. He calls upon Christians not to allow any complexifications, any collective syncretisms which the centuries might throw up, to distract them from the simple, sublime, and neglected truth of the character of God. In doing this he turns our attention to what is, after all, the centre of theo-logy.

His theory of divine/spiritual power serves to safeguard the goodness of that character, though at the price of limiting God's power in the external world or channelling it in through the 'back door' of interior human consciousness. In doing this, however, he is only giving coherent and open expression to the change in the understanding of divine power which modern consciousness requires and which has actually occurred widely within Christian circles.

7.e. Harnack as a starting-point for a contemporary theology of power

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to suggest a comprehensive list of 'improvements' to Harnack's constructive theology. I do wish, however, to suggest that there is much in his thought which could serve as a starting-point for anyone wishing to approach Christian theology from the point of view of power, and to indicate some possible directions which such a theology might take.

Any theology which wished to learn from Harnack would attempt to encourage the reintegration of theology into the broader world of human intellectual culture not only as a prophetic critic, but also as a

constructive partner. It would want to stay close to and profit from the fruits of church-historical research, from developments in our understanding of Christian origins, as well as being versed in the contributions of contemporary psychology and social science. It would further remain perpetually self-critical—here we learn from what Harnack was unable to do as much as from his example!—as well as critical of the Christian tradition and the Christian churches. It would perhaps attempt to improve on Harnack by incorporating into its system a religious understanding of the church. This might include a power analysis which stressed the kind of cooperative power by which the power of one individual can be used to empower rather than dominate another, creating a synergistic rather than a competitive effect. Any theology of the church which desired to be faithful to Harnack's memory would, however, need to stress the fallibility and contingency of ecclesiastical institutions, to limit strictly the scope of their authority, and guard against according that authority any intrinsic religious value or necessary mediatorial role between the individual and the divine.

Harnack's dualism of inner and external power must be considered a flaw, and a serious one, in his system, and something which, if one wishes to draw insights from Harnack for the doing of theology in the future, must be radically reexamined or reinterpreted. It was typical of Harnack's time to think in dichotomies, where today perhaps an arrangement of 'inner' and 'external' powers as opposite ends of a unified continuum would be deemed more adequate. The distinction may still be useful, however, as a working theoretical tool. Just as Wrong sets out various parameters with which to describe different types of powers, such as extensiveness, comprehensiveness and intensity [Wrong pp. 14-16], so it may be useful, in creating a theological typology of power, to add to these parameters and analyse types of power also in terms of their inwardness or externality. What cannot be supported is the attribution to this, as in Harnack, of a virtually ontological significance. Yet the problem, for Harnack's system, of not making such an attribution is that the theodicy is then threatened. If God is not thus epistemologically or ontologically 'locked out' of the external, physical world, it becomes more difficult to explain why God's activity in that world is not more noticeable.

Starting out from Harnack's analysis of the role of 'external' human power in the life of the church one could go in several directions. One route would be to develop his idealistic side and attempt to formulate a theory of Christian anarchism, of a church which severely minimised or entirely eliminated its institutional structures and in which neither coercive power nor even the mildest legitimated authority were given priority over individual conscience. Alternatively one could follow the example of Harnack's attitude to external human power in the church as demonstrated in his own life. Here effectively the dualism of inner and external power breaks down in favour of a continuum, and external human power is accepted as an inevitable and even welcome, though expressly junior, partner in the prosecution of the church's mission. A third direction, following on from Harnack in only a very limited sense, would be to accept Harnack's historical documentation of the transpotentiation process but to reject his negative judgment of it—to see it as a legitimate and providential development within the Christian tradition.

In a future theology of power, it would be necessary to continue to take the apologetic task very seriously indeed, and if possible to continue and develop Harnack's directions in theodicy. In doing this one would wish to take account of changes since Harnack's time in the assessment of the intrinsic superiority of modern consciousness. One would also need to take more seriously than Harnack did the phenomenology of the miraculous and para-normal, and make room in the system for the reality of these things. The possibility of God's direct action in the external world does, as indicated already, complicate the question of theodicy, but need not make it impossible, or necessarily lead to a collapse back into an old-fashioned supernaturalism.

Harnack's theology of power would prove a particularly valuable starting-point for the development of a contemporary theology of the inner life. The existential emphasis of Harnack's theology could be developed further. But while a delineation of meaninglessness, death and futility as 'the enemy' in Christianity would continue to be helpful, it would be necessary to rehabilitate the word 'nature' by clarifying what Harnack intended when he used the term and separating this meaning very clearly from any estimate of the natural world. Though as a result of a greater awareness of the impact of social groups and institutions on human behaviour we are less 'personalist' today than Harnack was, each of us still, in our inner life, exists in some sense alone, and it is in that personal aloneness that the gospel must take root if it is to have any significant impact on us at all. To that extent Harnack is still relevant, and his attempts to explain how divine/spritual power works can help us to appropriate it.

Postscript: Directions for further Harnack research

In addition to the suggestions for a theology of power based on Harnack's work which are discussed above, this investigation has brought to light several areas of Harnack scholarship which require more work. One obvious area, in the interests of those who do not read German, is that of translation. To offer the example of English, all of the extant translations of Harnack's works are elderly and could profit from updating, and several important works, including Marcion, the final edition of Dogmengeschichte, and the Reden und Aufsätze, have never been translated at all. This holds true as well for the Harnack biography. Presumably a similar situation exists in other languages.

Irscher suggests that there is a need for a further biography of Harnack, one which is more wissenschaftlich and more objective than his daughter's was able to be. Such a project would do well to take Döbertin's advice that in order to understand Harnack's religious upbringing it would be necessary, as well as reading Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, to investigate Theodosius Harnack's Katechetik [i.c.]. Irscher also calls for a revision of the Smend bibliography on the grounds that it is incomplete [i.c. n.12].

Dummer argues that in view of the fact that a sizeable chunk of his published works deal with New Testament subjects, Harnack's contributions as a New Testament scholar are worthy of more attention than they have received [i.c. n.13]. Dummer himself has provided, in his 1980 edition of Harnack's publications for the Berlin Academy, one tool to enable such research to be undertaken, and the collection will also be of use in obtaining more attention generally for these most neglected of Harnack's publications. In connexion with Harnack's biblical work, a fuller examination of his controversial call, on historical, theological and apologetic grounds, for the demotion from canonical status of the Old Testament within protestantism would prove both necessary and enlightening [Marcion, pp. 249-254].

An avenue of Harnack research which has borne fruit in the past is that of investigating his relationship to other theologians, and this could well prove fruitful again. A fuller comparison than we yet possess of his thought with Troeltsch's would be valuable, and, as mentioned earlier, the work on his relationship to Barth needs to be redone from a more dispassionate perspective. Another promising figure for such a comparison would be Bultmann.

Notes to chapter seven (Harnack's contribution to a theology of power)

7.c. Difficulties in Harnack's approach

1. Harnack's strong dualism of internal and external powers is read back, if not into Jesus himself, into the earliest Christian communities with his contentious idea of a dual leadership divided between charismatics (apostles, prophets, teachers) and local administrative officers (episkopoi, diakonoi) [HD I 214-216]. The charismatics ostensibly represent divine/spiritual power and the administrators external, social power, but, assuming that there was this duality of church leadership, the two sorts of power were doubtless mixed in each.

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