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JOHN KNOX AS STATESMAN.

It was unfortunate that the recent celebration of the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of John Knox should have taken place in the midst of a discussion as to the accuracy of the hitherto accepted date of that event. There is no longer much room for doubt that the challenge of Dr. Hay Fleming was well founded, and that the Reformer was born, not in 1505, but in 1515, and died at the age of fifty-seven. The commemoration, nevertheless, was highly successful, and revived the impression of Knox's great personality and his unique services. It called forth also some excellent additions to the literature of the subject, among which Professor Cowan's contribution to an American series of admirable monographs on the *Heroes of the Reformation* is one of the best. Mr. Andrew Lang's extraordinary outburst has affected no reputation but his own.

We propose in the present paper to consider Knox in one aspect only—that of statesman. That a man, who was simply parish minister of Edinburgh, and who never but for a few months in an emergency undertook any political function, should nevertheless be classed as a statesman, and one of the most capable and successful statesmen of his time, will seem strange to no one who really knows the history of Scotland during Queen Mary's reign.

THE IDEA OF DOGMATIC THEOLOGY.*

I. The name "Dogmatics" as used to designate a special theological discipline is of comparatively recent date. Its use was determined by the differentiation of the several theological disciplines, and especially by the distinction erected between Dogmatics and Ethics. It has been current, therefore, only since the middle of the 17th century, and widely only since the first half of the 18th century. In order to distinguish this department of theology from the other theological disciplines, such adjectives as didactic, systematic, and theoretic had been used. In 1659 L. Reinhart employed the name *Synopsis theologiae dogmaticae* to discriminate it from the historical and exegetical disciplines and also from Christian ethics. And he was followed by a number of other theologians.¹ It is now customary to use the term Systematic Theology to embrace both Dogmatics and Ethics. The name 'Dogmatics' lay ready at hand, since the Christian truths were called dogmas, and the distinction between Dogmatics and Ethics had already arisen. We shall not have time to enter into the merits of this distinction and its treatment. Recently there has been some reaction from too sharp a separation of these two disciplines.² Nevertheless it represents a well understood dis-

* Inaugural address delivered before the Board of Directors in Miller Chapel, December 17, 1907, on induction into the Assistant Professorship of Didactic and Polemic Theology in Princeton Theological Seminary.

¹ Compare Köstlin, Art. "Dogmatik", Herzog⁸ IV., p. 736, and Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, 1895, p. 3.

² The practice of separating the treatment of Dogmatics and Ethics was taken up into modern theology. The distinctions between them made by Schleiermacher, F. Nitzsch, and Kaftan have recently been subjected to a searching criticism by H. H. Wendt, who calls his recent book *System der christlichen Lehre*, in order to include dogmatics and ethics under a closer treatment. Cf. Wendt, *Sys. d. chr. Lehre*, Teil I., 1906, pp. 15ff.

inction, and the term Dogmatics may be taken to denote what man must believe concerning God, and Ethics the duty which God requires of man.

The term "Dogmatic Theology", however, is preferable to the single term "Dogmatics", since the latter term describes this science from a more or less formal standpoint, whereas the term "Theology" gives it a distinct place in the total organism of the sciences by defining it from the point of view of its content or subject matter. By adding to this the adjective "Dogmatic", we bring out also certain fundamental characteristics of the science in question from the formal point of view.

In order to understand what we mean by defining this part of theology as dogmatic, it is necessary to determine what is meant by the term dogma.³ The term is derived from *δοκεῖν*, meaning not merely that something seems true, but that one is fully determined upon it or is fully persuaded of its truth so that it has absolute authority and compels the trust of such a one. It denotes, therefore, something fixed, determined, authoritative, and publicly recognized as binding. Thus in the LXX the term *δόγμα* is used to translate the Hebrew words כְּתָב טִבְעִים אֲסָרָה דָּת and denotes a royal decree. For example, in Esth. iv. 8, though omitted in the earliest mss., it is found in \aleph^{ca} inf. mg. translating the Hebrew text, and denoting a royal decree.⁴ And in the margin of \aleph^{ca} at Esth. ix. 1 it has the same significance and translates the same Hebrew word. Also in Dan. vi. 12 in the Chigi text, the term occurs to denote the laws of the Medes and Persians; in which sense it also appears in the Greek version of Daniel attributed to Theodotion in vi. 8, 12, 15. And again it is

³ On the meaning of the term dogma *vid.* Bavinck *op. cit.* I., pp. 1-6. Köstlin *op. cit.*, Lobstein; *Einleit. in die ev. Dogmatik*, 1897, pp. 7-24. W. Schmidt, *Christliche Dogmatik*, I., pp. 1-19.

⁴ Esth. iv. 8 \aleph^{ca} inf. mg. τὸ ἀντίγραφον γράμμα τὸ τοῦ δόγματος. \aleph A. B. om. γρ. τὸ τ. δ. Esth. ix. 1 \aleph^{ca} mg. has τὸ δογ. αὐτοῦ ποιῆσαι, \aleph A. B. om. Cf. also Dan. LXX. vi. 12; Dan. Theod. ii. 13; iii. 10, 12; vi. 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 26.

used to denote a royal edict or decree in the Theodotion version of Daniel at iii. 10, 12; iv. 3; vi. 9, 10, 13, 26. In the New Testament the word occurs five times. In Lk. ii. 1 it denotes the royal edict of the emperor, and also in Acts xvii. 7. It is used also for Apostolic ordinances or commands in Acts xvi. 4, and for the Mosaic ordinances twice in Paul's Epistles—Col. ii. 14, and Eph. ii. 15. In every case it denotes something fixed and authoritative.

This general meaning is found also in the use of the term in the writings of the ancient philosophers.⁵ There the word is used of both metaphysical and ethical first principles and fundamental truths. Plato in his Republic speaks of fundamental principles or dogmas of right and good in which we were brought up, using the word dogma for these principles. In the Latin writers the word "decretum" was used for the Greek word *δῶγμα*. In Seneca, for example, the word "decreta" is used to denote fundamental principles both ethical and metaphysical, and the section of philosophy which treats of these is considered the dogmatic, *i. e.* principal, part of philosophy, underlying the hortatory part. These principles Seneca regarded as fixed. In Seneca it is,

⁵ Plato, *Repub.* Lib. vii. 538. ἔστι που ἡμῖν δῶγματα ἐκ παλῶν περὶ δικαίων καὶ καλῶν, ἐν οἷς ἐκτεθράμμεθα ὥσπερ ὑπὸ γονεῦσι. πειθαρχοῦντές τε καὶ τιμῶντες αὐτά. The Latin writers transl. *δῶγμα* by "decretum". Seneca in *Ep.* 94 and 95 shows that fundamental principles (decreta) underlie particular precepts—*vid. Ep.* 95. Op. 4. "Sed ut, omisso principio, rem ipsam aggrediar. Beata, inquit, vita constat ex actionibus rectis: ad actiones rectas praecepta perducunt: ergo ad beatam vitam praecepta sufficiunt. Non semper ad actiones rectas praecepta perducunt, etc. . . . Si honesta, inquit, actio ex praeceptis venit, ad beatam vitam praecepta abunde sunt: atqui est illud: ergo et hoc. His respondemus, Actiones honestas ex *decretis* (italics mine) fieri, non tantum praeceptis". "Praetera nulla ars contemplativa sine decretis suis est, quae Graeci vocant *δῶγματα κ. τ. λ.*" Also Cicero *Academ.* lib. ii. c. 9, Tauchnitz ed. viii. p. 37. "Ipsa autem philosophia, quae rationibus progredi debet, quem habebit exitum? Sapientiae vero quid futurum est? Quae neque de se ipsa dubitare debet, neque de suis decretis, quae philosophi vocant *δῶγματα*: quorum nullum sine sceleri prodi poterit. . . . Non potest igitur dubitari quin decretum nullum falsum esse, sapientique satis non sit, non esse falsum, sed etiam stabile, fixum, ratum esse debeat: quod movere nulla ratio queat."

as Schmidt remarks, the question of the *a priori* defended against extreme empiricism.

In this way the word also came to be used for propositions which set forth fundamental religious truth resting on a divine revelation. Thus Josephus, writing against Apion, calls the contents of the sacred books of the Jews, dogmas of God.⁶ In this sense also it is found in the Patristic literature, denoting authoritative truth of God. Thus Ignatius in his Epistle to the Magnesians speaks of the dogmas of the Lord and the Apostles, exhorting his readers to be established in them.⁷ The word is used also of the fixed and fundamental Christian truths. Thus Clement of Alexandria speaks of the orthodox doctrine of the Apostles as a dogma in accordance with the Gospel.⁸ Origen uses the term to denote fundamental Christian doctrine in distinction from philosophical speculation,⁹ and fixed divine truth over against all human opinion.¹⁰

The use of the word shows that whether the term dogma was used for political decrees, philosophical first principles, or Christian doctrine, the idea which underlies all uses is that of *authority*. A dogma is a thesis or proposition which has absolute authority. That the use of the term in the New Testament is political is not significant, and Lobstein is incorrect in inferring from this that the reason the patristic writers applied the term to Christian doctrine was because of their adoption of the philosophical usage when they were transforming Christianity into a philosophy, the idea of authority being thus transferred to the doctrine.¹¹ The facts, on the contrary, show that the word denoted authority, and that the Fathers of the Church chose

⁶ Josephus, *cont. Apion*. lib. i. § 8, Niese ed. v. 9—“δῆλον δ' ἐστὶν ἔργῳ, πῶς ἡμεῖς πρόσμιεν τοῖς ἰδίῳις γράμμασι· τοσοῦτου γὰρ αἰῶνος ἥδη παρωχηκός οὔτε ἀφελεῖν αὐτῶν οὔτε μεταθεῖναι τε τόλμηκεν, πᾶσι δὲ σύμφυτόν ἐστιν εὐθὺς ἐκ πρώτης γενέσεως Ἰουδαίῳις τὸ νομίζειν αὐτὰ θεοῦ δόγματα.” κ. τ. λ.

⁷ Ignatius, *ad Magnes*. c. 13, Migne, v. 672.

⁸ Clement Alex. *Strom.* vii. Dindorf ed. iii. p. 343.

⁹ Origen, *contra Celsum* i. 7, Migne xi. 668, also iii. 39 Migne xi. 971.

¹⁰ Origen, *Commentary on Mt.*, Migne xiii. 1036.

¹¹ Lobstein, *op. cit.* pp. 21-24.

it for this reason to characterize the fundamental Christian doctrine, because they recognized that the Apostles claimed for it an absolute authority, although the word dogma was not used in that sense by them. Whence this authority is derived, the term of course does not say. In the case of philosophical dogmas the source of the authority is the rational or self-evidencing character of the truth itself; in political decrees it is the government; and in theological dogmas, it is ultimately the divine revelation or the witness of God. Moreover, we should not lose sight of the fact that the theologian of the ancient Church never conceived of that Church as one among many schools of truth, nor did he think that Christian doctrine had right to recognition only in the Church. On the contrary, he recognized the absolute character of Christian truth as resting on the authority of the divine revelation, and so he spoke of the Christian doctrines as "dogmas of God". And when he defined them as "ecclesiastical", he did not mean that the Church gave them their authority. That was a later, and what Schmidt calls a "degenerative", conception.¹²

A doctrinal proposition, then, had authority in the Church because resting on a divine revelation. This is true even of the Romish position, for upon their view it would have to be added that the dogma was authoritative because the Church was the infallible bearer of the divine revelation.¹³ In accordance with this it appears that Schleiermacher¹⁴ and Rothe¹⁵ overemphasized the element of recognition by the Church, in their conception of dogma. It was the divine revelation in the Scripture which gave to dogma its authoritative character. This was regarded as fundamental, and though the element of public recognition enters into the idea, doctrines are not dogmas so much because of this as because of their basis in the divine revelation. Accordingly a dogma does not rest upon any mere personal authority; nor is the

¹² Cf. Schmidt *op. cit.* p. 14; compare also Köstlin *op. cit.* p. 435.

¹³ Cf. Bavinek *op. cit.* I. p. 4.

¹⁴ Schleiermacher, *Christliche Sitte*, Werke, I Abtheil. xii. p. 5.

¹⁵ Rothe, *Zur Dogmatik*, 1890, p. 10.

idea of public recognition the most essential element in the conception. Furthermore, certain distinctions sometimes claimed to have been inherent in the idea, are foreign to it. Thus the distinction given in a single sentence of Basil, according to which dogma is a secret doctrine or one not openly proclaimed, has probably been made too much of, for Basil was speaking of certain Church practices or mysteries.¹⁶ Neither was a distinction made between dogma as a human conception of a divine doctrine and the divine doctrine itself, for it has been satisfactorily shown by Köstlin that the single statement of Marcellus of Ancyra to the effect that the name dogma relates to a human opinion, is quite contrary to the general usage, which saw in the doctrine as formulated by the Church, the truth of God. In fact, Lobstein acknowledges that, though there are a few passages in the Patristic literature which discriminate a human form in dogma as distinct from its divine content, these are the exceptions, and most of the Fathers used the term for revealed truths without distinguishing their human form as dogma.¹⁷

There is, however, also in the idea of dogma the element of social recognition or acceptance within a definite sphere. A doctrine might rest upon a Scripture basis and yet not be a dogma. Hence Bavinck makes a distinction between what he calls dogma *quoad se* and dogma *quoad nos*.¹⁸ The former is a doctrine which rests upon the witness of God apart from its recognition in the Church. But this is not yet a dogma in the complete sense. For one thing, it must be stated in a logical or scientific form which it may not have in Scripture. Then again in order to avoid the danger of identifying the private opinion of a theologian with the truth of God, it is necessary to know Scripture truth as it has reached recognition in the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This is also necessary because

¹⁶ Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto ad Amphil.* c. 27. Cf. also on this point Schmidt *op. cit.* pp. 9ff.; also Köstlin *op. cit.* p. 435.

¹⁷ Cf. Lobstein, *op. cit.* p. 13.

¹⁸ Cf. Bavinck, *op. cit.* I. p. 5.

God in all His fulness as revealed cannot be fully grasped by any individual or group of individuals. Accordingly the subject of theological knowledge must be, as Dr. Kuyper has so richly shown, regenerate humanity under the guidance and illumination of the Holy Spirit.¹⁹ From this standpoint the Confession as the expression of the faith of the Christian Church is seen to be of the greatest importance for the dogmatician. But the theologian cannot limit himself to the Church's Confession. Her life is richer than can be comprised in a confessional statement. The whole history of doctrine must be contributory to the task of Dogmatics, and whether it be a doctrine of a theologian or a confessional dogma, in either case it must never be taken in a merely historical sense, but must be appropriated by the theologian, and set forth as his own belief and as absolutely valid truth. It is because dogmatics is a normative and not a merely historical discipline, that it presupposes the personal persuasion or belief of the dogmatician. Accordingly he must take his standpoint within the Christian Church and be fully persuaded of the truth of the Christian revelation. It may further be said that only from this standpoint and the experience involved in it, can Christian doctrine be understood. But it is a fatal exaggeration of this idea when the claim to the absolute validity of Christian doctrine is limited to this sphere and not maintained in relation to all scientific and philosophic thought. If this is not maintained, the absolutely objective validity of the Christian dogma cannot be maintained. It is also from this point of view, *i. e.* that Dogmatics is a normative science, that it becomes clear that the dogmatician must take his standpoint within the Confession of a single Church. For since he is not dealing with a comparative study of religions, it will not suffice to set forth the main characteristics of Christianity in which all Churches agree. Since he aims to set forth Christian doctrine as absolutely valid truth and in its entirety, he must stand upon the Confession which he be-

¹⁹ Kuyper, *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology*, E. T. 1898 pp. 297ff.

lieves sets forth the essential principle of Christianity in its purity. It is from this standpoint that we believe that the theologian should stand within the Reformed Theology as the purest expression of the essential religious principle of dependence on God in its theological and soteriological applications.

The main idea which emerges from this brief discussion is that of authority. Accordingly in qualifying theology by the adjective dogmatic, what we mean to affirm is that it is a normative science and not a historical one. This is being recognized by those whose idea of the nature of authority differs from the older or evangelical Protestant conception, as for example Kaftan and E. Mayer.²⁰ The aim of Dogmatic Theology is to set forth not what men have believed concerning God, but what they must believe if they would reach the truth. It is not a merely historical or critical treatment of dogmas which have been held by the Church. The importance of these we have seen, and also its ground, but any such treatment is not Dogmatics. Accordingly the majority of theologians are rejecting the view of Rothe, who, having thus limited the idea of Dogmatics, was naturally led to supplement it by a speculative theological system which claimed to set forth the final truth. On the contrary, Dogmatics must claim to set forth in scientific form absolutely valid truth, and to embrace the entirety of Christian doctrine. Hence from a formal point of view the definition of Köstlin is fairly adequate.²¹ He defines Dogmatics as the "scientific exposition of the religious truth which is valid or fixed for the community, as known and recognized by it as springing from divine revelation". This, however, is too formal a definition, since it might embrace all views of authority, according as it conceived of the nature of the divine revelation. The Protestant doctrine held that authority was

²⁰ Kaftan, *Dogmatik* 3 u. 4 Aufl. 1901, § 1. § 10, and especially "Zur Dogmatik" Arts. in *Zeitschr. f. Theol. u. Kirche*, 1903. E. Mayer "Die Aufgabe der Dogmatik", in *Theol. Abhandlungen f. H. Holtzmann* 1902 pp. 183ff.

²¹ Cf. Köstlin, *op. cit.* p. 435.

external, and rested it on a supernatural revelation which was conceived as including the direct intrusion of God into the sphere of second causes, and as including the communication of truth directly by God to man. In other words, the revelation was regarded as supernatural not merely in its ultimate source in God, but in the mode of its communication. This idea so far from being conceived as inconsistent with the material principle of the Protestant Reformation, was always thought of as equally primary and essential. Indeed, the receptive attitude of Protestant piety involved in the reception of Justification by Faith, went together with the dependent attitude over against the principle of external authority in religious knowledge involved in this idea of revelation. This, moreover, was the Scripture doctrine of revelation, as is being recognized by the new school of comparative religions more fully than it was by the Ritschlians, since the attitude of the former to the authority of Scripture is freer.²² The justification, therefore, of this position is a question of the evidences for the trustworthiness of Christ and the Apostles as teachers, which question resolves itself into the evidences for Christianity as a supernatural religion, which takes us beyond the limits of our subject.

The inner reason, however, for this view of revelation and authority can be seen when we take up the idea of Dogmatic Theology not merely from the formal standpoint, but from the standpoint of its content or subject-matter. This is brought out by calling this science "Theology". By thus defining it we mean that it is the science of God. In this way, and in no other, can it have a distinct place in the organism of the sciences. The distinguishing point in the definition of any science is found in its subject-matter, *i. e.* in the object with which it is concerned, rather than in its method. Only, therefore, by defining this discipline as the science of God, can it have a distinct place as a separate

²² Cf. F. Doerr, "Religionsgeschichtliche Methode u. Bibelauctorität" *Prot. Monatshefte*, VII Jahrg. H. 10. 1903, pp. 361-393.

science and as the highest of all sciences. If, on the other hand, we define it as the science of religion or the science of faith, it loses its place as a distinct science. If the terms religion and faith be taken in a subjective sense, it becomes a part of anthropology or religious psychology. If these terms be taken in an objective sense, and theology be defined as the science of the Christian religion or faith, then theology is still a branch of anthropology, and, if a special supernatural revelation be denied, becomes either a science of comparative religion or a philosophy of religion. If, on the other hand, a special revelation be admitted and theology be defined as the science of this revelation or of the Christian faith in this sense, even this is not adequate, since in the science of theology this revelation is not regarded from the standpoint of the light which it throws on religion, but the Christian religion is rather regarded as a revelation of the nature of God. Hence the only adequate definition of theology is that it is the science of God, and in defining it as dogmatic we distinguish it from historical disciplines as a normative science.

This also determines the way by which the theologian must obtain his knowledge. If Theology is the science of God, the knowledge of God can be had only by revelation. Man cannot investigate God; consequently the methods of observation and experiment as used in all other sciences are not possible in theology. God is a personal Spirit, and hence we can know Him only as He chooses to reveal Himself to us. This is true to a large extent of all personal life. The only way by which we can know finite persons is through their opening their inner life to us. When, further, we bear in mind the fact that God is an infinite Spirit and that we are finite, it is obvious that we can know God only as He reveals Himself. This is true apart from the effects of sin upon the knowledge of God. Apart from the noëtic effects of sin, revelation is inner in the religious nature of man apprehending God as revealed in man and nature. Hence apart from sin the authority of religious

knowledge would be an inner one. But sin has darkened the mind, and Scripture, history, and experience show that this effect must be counteracted. This involves a change in the method of revelation and consequently a change in the nature of authority. The nature of this change must be determined by the idea of natural or general revelation and the effect of sin upon it. The idea of revelation involves two factors—God revealing or as revealed in the mind of man and in nature, and the religious nature of man which apprehends this revelation. It is to be carefully noted that this twofold character belongs to the idea of revelation itself. Hence we cannot conceive of the matter as if we had two factors in the science of theology, which is the science of God revealed, viz., God as revealed and the apprehension of this revelation by the theologian. The revelation to be apprehended is itself twofold, involving God as revealed and the apprehension of this by man. And thus the effect of sin is twofold, defacing the image of God and clouding our apprehension of it. Consequently in special revelation we must have not only God's supernatural redemptive and revealing acts culminating in the Incarnation and Resurrection of Christ, and thus restoring the divine image; we must have also an external and supernatural word-revelation to give us the authoritative and restored interpretation and apprehension of the supernatural fact-revelation, and this also must be in the same supernatural manner, involving the principle of external authority in religious knowledge. And all this is necessary in addition to the spiritual illumination of the theologian and the Church, *i. e.* of the subjects of theological science. Hence while this last mentioned illumination is necessary, it will not do to conceive of special revelation as simply the inner apprehension either of supernatural acts, as Rothe conceived it, or of the fact of Christ, as the Ritschlian conceives it. In this way it becomes an inner revelation subject to all the laws of psychic development and to the noëtic effects of sin which have not thus been corrected in their totality.

The inner authority and revelation is thus impossible for sinful man.

This same thing can be seen also from a slightly different angle. Dogmatic Theology intends to be Christian Theology, *i. e.* its very core is in a soteriological and historical religion, in a revelation in historic facts and an historic interpretation of these facts. If, then, Theology is to remain a normative science and not become a merely historical discipline, it must rest upon the presupposition that Christianity is not the product of an inner revelation which would make it simply the crowning product of human religious thought, but of a revelation supernatural in mode and distinct in kind from other religions. And finally, since Theology is the science of the object of Christian knowledge and faith, *i. e.* of God as revealed, and not of that knowledge or faith itself; if there is to be any science of Theology in this sense, revelation must be conceived of as the communication of truth by God to man in a supernatural manner, and consequently as involving the principle of external authority. And we shall see that if this idea of revelation and authority be changed to the inner or experimental view, the idea of Dogmatics must also be changed, and becomes the science of faith or the knowledge involved in faith.²³

It is necessary at this point to discriminate the Protestant view of authority from that of the Roman Catholic Church, since they are identified by the Ritschlian theologians. We have seen that there is an element of public recognition involved in the conception of dogma. This was exaggerated by the Romish Church. The principle of authority is extended by them from the divine revelation to the human apprehension of it, and it is assumed that God would not have given to men an authoritative revelation without also having given an authoritative apprehension of it. This is found in the Church which, being infallible, excludes error and puts man in the possession of absolute truth. To believe, therefore, is to accept implicitly what the Church

²³ Cf. the ideas of Kaftan and Mayer *op. cit.*

teaches. That this involves an extension of the principle of authority for which there is no warrant, we have not space to indicate. We must, however, point out in a word that it is essentially different from the Protestant view. The Protestant recognizes the place of the Christian Church in the sense that he regards her and not the individual as the subject of theological science. He does not, however, make the Church's apprehension of revelation the subject-matter of Theology. If he did, Theology must either become a historical science, or else must extend the principle of authority in a way for which there is no warrant.

We have sought to show that Dogmatic Theology is a normative science; that this its normative character involves the principle of external authority in religious knowledge; and that this latter depends upon and is determined by the nature of revelation which is supernatural in its mode, and consists in the communication of truth by God in a supernatural manner. The possibility and fact of such a revelation are questions for the Evidences of Christianity. The reason for the necessity of such a revelation, however, lies, as we have attempted to indicate, in the noëtic effects of sin, which necessitate a revelation supernatural in the above sense and as a consequence involve an external authority in religious knowledge.

II. There is now prevalent a new conception of dogma and of the science of Dogmatics in the Ritschlian school; and a denial of the possibility of a normative science of Dogmatics in the newer school of comparative religions.

Ritschlianism was a protest against rationalism and mysticism. The abandonment of the authority of Scripture had led to the undervaluation of the entire historic element in Christianity; so that both its historic facts and its doctrines were regarded simply as the husk of rational truth or the product of Christian feeling. In this way Christian Theology had become a philosophy of religion; or in a mystical reaction from this, the demand for an undogmatic Christianity threatened not only Christianity, which is not the

product of religious sentiment, but even the entire intellectual content of religion.²⁴ A protest against this neglect of the historical and dogmatic element in Christianity, has come from the members of the Ritschlian school. Thus Harnack and Herrmann have sought to defend the importance of the historic element in Christianity against Lessing and Kant,²⁵ and Kaftan in reply to Dreyer, and also Lobstein, have shown that dogma is essential to Christianity and that what is needed is a new dogma.²⁶

This conception of dogma can be understood only in the light of the fundamental motives and principles of this school. The underlying motive of Ritschlianism is an apologetic one, viz., to find a ground of certitude in Christianity which shall be independent of the results of historical criticism and of metaphysics, and so to state the content of the Christian faith that it too shall be independent in both these respects.²⁷ In order to realize this, emphasis is laid on the revelation of God in the historic Christ. This revelation is held to be independent in both the above respects by means of the well-known sharp distinction between religious and

²⁴ Cf. the treatment of Christianity in Kant's, *Relig. innerhalb d. Grenzen d. bl. Vernunft*, and Fichte's, *Anweisung zum selig. Leben*; also the construction of Christianity in the philosophical works of E. Caird and T. H. Green; also the distinction between the Christian principle and Christ in the "liberal theology" *vid.* Biedermann, *Chr. Dogm.* II. § 815. For the mystical tendency cf. Dreyer, *Undogmatisches Christentum*, and the treatment of Christian dogma by the late Prof. Sabatier in his various works, especially the lecture on the "Vitality of Christian Dogma" in the *Esquisse d'une Phil. de la Relig. etc.* 1897.

²⁵ Harnack, *Das Christentum u. die Geschichte* 1896; Hermann, *Warum bedarf unser Glaube geschichtl. Thatsachen* 1884.

²⁶ Kaftan, *Glaube u. Dogma* 1889; Lobstein, *op. cit.*

²⁷ It is true that both Hermann in his writings, and the late Prof. Reischle—"Der Streit über die Begründung des Glaubens auf dem geschichtl. Christus" in the *Zeitschr. f. T. u. K.* 1897—make a distinction between the ground and the content of faith, and are seeking an independent ground. Nevertheless, this ground once determined becomes a norm for the determination of the content of faith. Hence the effort to keep this content also independent of historical criticism and metaphysics becomes manifest. For a criticism of the Ritschlian position on this point *vid.* Kähler, *Der sogenannte historische Jesus u. d. geschl. bibl. Christus* 1896.

theoretic knowledge. The idea is that the historic Christ remains after historical criticism has done its work, and after a metaphysical dogma of Greek origin has been eliminated. But since this criticism is largely determined by an anti-supernaturalistic bias, the supposed independence of its results turns out to be a surrender of all that is difficult to defend against a criticism determined by naturalistic presuppositions. And since the idea of theology without metaphysics does not mean simply a theology which shall be free from a speculative reconstruction from a standpoint outside of the Christian revelation, but a theology without any metaphysical elements, *i. e.*, a dogma without any element which transcends and is not determined by religious experience, the new dogma vibrates between naturalism and phenomenalism, *i. e.* when not admittedly naturalistic it becomes phenomenalistic. It expresses itself, they say, in religious knowledge which springs from faith, and not in metaphysical propositions.

Not only is the nature and content of this new dogma thus quite different from that of the older Protestantism; the idea of revelation and consequently of the authority of the new dogma and of the science of Dogmatics is also fundamentally different from the older view. In order to understand this conception of dogma, we must set forth briefly how the Ritschlians conceive of the development of the old dogma and its contrast with the new. These theologians trace in the development of Christian doctrine a continuous approximation of Christianity to philosophical knowledge. It is held that under the influence of the Hellenic spirit, theology sought to transform religious truth into an objective and impersonal creed. Thus in conceiving the science of the Christian faith as an objective science of revealed things, the fatal error was committed of transferring to the religious sphere the method of metaphysical speculation. Moreover, the formation of the Catholic Church involved fatal consequences for the conception of Christian dogma. In order to defend Christianity against

error, the Church expressed her tradition in rules of faith, fixed the Canon of inspired books, and realized externally her unity in the episcopate, claiming for it unity, catholicity and apostolicity. In this lay the germs of the idea of infallibility and of a dogma to which attaches an external authority. Nevertheless, it is held, the Reformation principles are in direct contradiction to this idea of dogma. The religious principle of Protestantism and the old idea of dogma are opposed to one another. To show this they point us to the Protestant ideas of faith, of the Church, and of religious authority.²⁸ Faith according to the Protestant idea is not mere assent to truth on the basis of testimony external to consciousness. It is a personal conviction, an experiential trust by which we experience pardon and life. Hence there is a contradiction, we are told, between the Protestant view of faith and the idea that it terminates on truths supposed to be communicated by a supernatural revelation and possessing an external authority. Thus a divorce is made between faith and the religious life which involves a contradiction of the principle of Protestantism. Moreover, according to Protestantism the Church is not an organism of supernatural powers or the repository of infallible religious truths. Hence the notion of infallible dogma is appropriate only to the Roman Catholic conception, and in transferring the notion of authority from the Church to the Scripture, the Protestant theologians only adopted a Romish idea foreign to the genius of Protestantism. Hence we must change the old idea of authority, and instead of regarding Scripture as an external authority, containing a supernaturally communicated revelation, authority becomes inward, residing in the Gospel of Jesus with its compelling power. There is also held to be a contradiction between the traditional conception of dogma and the truly Protestant idea of authority. Hence the new dogma must be in harmony with

²⁸ Cf. Lobstein *op. cit.* ch. ii.; Hermann, "Christlich-protestantische Dogmatik," in *Kultur der Gegenwart*, Teil I Abt. IV Lief. 3. 1906. pp. 583-632; also "Die Lage u. d. Aufgabe der ev. Dogm.," *Zeitschr. f. T. u. K.*, H. I, 1907, pp. 1-30.

these Protestant principles. It must express in a scientific or logical form the religious faith of the Christian community, and especially its content is found in the sphere of religious faith. It must seek to interpret the Protestant faith, and while it does not find its norm in modern thought but in the Gospel, it must, to use Lobstein's language, "correspond to the spiritual temper of our Christian consciousness". Accordingly its authority will not be attached to or derived from its intellectual form, but resides in its religious content, which is the Gospel.

This being the nature of the new dogma, the idea and task of Dogmatics is changed. The change is of course determined by the change in the idea of revelation. This is no longer conceived as the supernatural communication of truth about God and the objects of faith; revelation is the product of the religious life of man, or is the effect of Christ upon the religious life. Hence the task of Dogmatics is not to set forth doctrines which rest upon the authority of Scripture, but to give doctrinally formulated expression to the Christian faith, or to the revelation in Christ, or to the appropriation of that revelation, according as the subjective or objective tendency predominates in the individual theologian. That which is common to all is the rejection of the view that dogmatics is a science which has to do with the objects of Christian faith as with immediately given objects of knowledge, and the conception of dogmatics as the science of the Christian faith or the knowledge which springs from such faith.²⁹ Some define it as the science of faith or of the Christian faith.³⁰ To this general class

²⁹ Cf. especially Mayer, *op. cit.* pp. 185, 186; also Kaftan, *Dogmatik*, 3 u. 4 Aufl. p. 98.

³⁰ Lipsius: "Christian dogmatics is the scientific exposition of the Christian faith," *Lehrb. d. ev. prot. Dogmatik* 1893, p. 1. Lobstein: Dogmatics or *Glaubenslehre* is "the systematic exposition of evangelical faith (ev. Heilsglaubens)," *op. cit.* p. 59. F. A. B. Nitzsch: it is "the scientific exposition and defense of the evangelical faith or consciousness in the forms of thought and expression of the present age (die evangelisch-christliche Dogmatik ist die wissenschaftliche Darlegung und Vertheidigung des evang. christl. Glaubens- order Bewusst-

belong the definitions of R. A. Lipsius (a member of the liberal school showing Ritschlian influence), Lobstein, F. A. B. Nitzsch (a theologian of speculative tendency but with marked Ritschlian characteristics), and Haering, in his recently published *Dogmatik*. Others define it as the science of the knowledge which results from or is involved in faith.³¹ This is the view of Kaftan and of Wendt in his newly published *System der christl. Lehre*. Others, as, for example, Mayer, conceive of the task of Dogmatics as twofold, first to state the nature of Christian faith (subjectively), and second, to set forth the doctrines which are involved in this faith.³²

In attempting a critical estimate of this idea of Dogmatics, it is necessary to go back to the fundamental ideas of this school. The assertion that the evangelical Protestant conception of faith is inconsistent with the principle of external authority has a certain amount of plausibility, which is no doubt enhanced by the too intellectualistic idea of faith in the works of some of the Reformers. It is true that faith is an attitude of personal trust springing from the heart. It

seinhaltes in den Denk- und Ausdrucksformen des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters), *Dogmatik*, 1892, p. 1. Haering defines Dogmatics as "the science of the Christian faith" (die Wissenschaft des christl. Glaubens, dessen zusammenhängende Darstellung die Glaubenslehre sein will), *Der christliche Glaube (Dogmatik)*, 1906, p. 145.

³¹ Kaftan, although he defines Dogmatics as "the Science of the Christian truth which is believed and confessed on the basis of the divine revelation" (*Dogm.* p. 1), nevertheless in describing the task of Dogmatics, says that its chief task is to set forth the knowledge involved in the faith called forth by revelation—p. 92. (Die eigentliche Hauptaufgabe der ev. Dogmatik besteht darin, die Erkenntniss darzulegen, die sich dem Glauben aus der Aneignung der von der Schrift bezeugten Gottesoffenbarung ergibt). Wendt, *System der christl. Lehre*, I, 1906, p. 1, says that it is his purpose to unfold systematically the religious ideas which in their entirety make up the religious view and doctrine of Christianity,—by which he means, as his subsequent treatment shows, to set forth a knowledge involved in the Christian faith, his idea being similar to that of Kaftan. For a concise survey of the recent literature, cf. Titius, "Zur Dogmatik d. Gegenwart", *Theol. Rundschau*, 1907, pp. 365-379.

³² Cf. E. Mayer *op. cit.* pp. 191. ff.

is also to be admitted that true faith in a certain sense implicates a certain doctrinal system. It is also true that spiritual truth must be spiritually discerned. All this was recognized by the theologians of the Reformation. But it does not at all follow that there is a contradiction between the psychological nature of faith and the principle of external authority. Nor does it follow from the fact that saving faith implicates a system of doctrine, that such a system can be deduced from the Christian consciousness under the control, in some way, of Scripture. This latter point need not detain us. The individually conditioned character of Christian experience, and the fact that regeneration does not remove all at once the noëtic effects of sin, make it evident that such an attempt must be unsuccessful. Nor would these theologians deny this. It is necessary, however, to show that faith may be an inner act of heart trust and at the same time its content of knowledge be received upon the basis of external testimony.

Because psychologically faith is an inner act of trust, it does not follow that either its ground or its content must be exclusively internal. Faith is grounded conviction. When it terminates upon the Person of the Saviour, it is personal trust. But the grounds of this trust may be external, and its knowledge-content enriched upon the basis of external testimony without the psychological character of faith being thereby affected. Plausible as it may sound, this contention of the Ritschlian school is not in accordance with the fact of the matter. When this is seen, their whole method of setting aside the Protestant doctrine of the rule of faith by simply identifying it with that of Roman Catholicism, loses its force. Moreover, according to the Ritschlian position, faith, whether taken in a subjective sense or conceived as an objective body of truth, is not grounded in a manner adequate to give to Dogmatics its normative character. Considered subjectively the act of faith is the act of a rational man who has innumerable experiences and theoretic opinions. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary

that the Christian believer and the Christian theologian have some clear idea of the relation which the content of his faith sustains to the rest of his experiences.³³ Still further, from the objective standpoint the sharp distinction between religious and theoretic knowledge, or rather the sharp separation of their respective spheres, gives an inadequate apologetic basis for the normative character of the science of Christian Dogmatics. At least it must be said that this is the logical tendency of the position, and though attempts have been made, notably by Kaftan, Wobbermin, and Wendt, to make good this defect, it cannot be said that they have been successful, because of their adherence to the Kantian separation between the theoretic and the practical reason.³⁴ Reason is one, and no reasonable certitude can be attained when the unity of its entire content is destroyed. Accordingly Kügelgen seems to have followed the logic of the situation in renouncing the scientific character of Dogmatics and the right of apologetics.³⁵

The usual result has been, not an independence of philosophy, but a surrender to naturalistic modes of thought. This result is fatal to a normative science of Christian Dogmatics. We have left no supernatural Christ in any strictly metaphysical sense of the term. At least this is the logic of the fundamental ideas of the school, and even the Ritschlian theologians of the right wing fall short of a really divine Christ.³⁶ This being so, Christ can have brought no supernatural revelation in any strict sense of the term. Traub,³⁷ for example, admits that any idea of

³³ Cf. Lasson, *Zur Theorie des christlichen Dogmas*, 1897 p. 37.

³⁴ Cf. Kaftan, *Wahrheit des Christentums*; Wobbermin, *Der christl. Gottesglaube*; Wendt, *Der Erfahrungsbeweis f. die Wahrheit des Christentums*.

³⁵ Kügelgen, "Aufgaben u. Grenzen d. luth. Dogm." *Hefte zur Chr. Welt*, No. 41, p. 23; compare Wendland's remarks on Kügelgen—"Das wissenschaftliche u. apologet. Recht d. prot. Dogmatik", *Pr. Monatsh.* IV Jahrg. H. 4, pp. 138-143.

³⁶ Vid. the uncertain and vague treatment of the question of Christ's pre-existence and relation to God by Haering, *op. cit.* pp. 443-453.

³⁷ Traub, Arts. "Aus d. dogmat. Arbeit d. Gegenwart," *Zeitschr. f. Th. u. K.* 1906, p. 476.

a revelation supernatural in its mode or in any causal sense must be abandoned and revelation be conceived as supernatural only from the standpoint of its spiritual content.³⁸ But Bousset is quite right in his criticism of this claim, for if there can be no revelation directly supernatural in its mode of occurrence, then the judgment by which one singles out the Christian revelation from the standpoint of its content is a purely subjective one; and in the light of a philosophy which denies the supernatural in any real sense, any claim that Christianity is more than the highest development of human religious thought is not to be allowed. Accordingly the Ritschlian claim as regards the absolute and final character of Christianity cannot be sustained. If God has not entered directly or immediately into the sphere of finite psychic events to communicate truth, then the Christian revelation is only the highest development thus far of human religious thought. In denying what he calls the old or mechanical supernaturalism, the Ritschlian cannot make good his claim that Christianity is the absolute and final religion, and members of the new school of comparative religions, notably Troeltsch and Bousset, have shown this clearly. This, of course, is disastrous for Christian Dogmatics as a normative science.

Not only is this theology not able to maintain the finality of Christianity and consequently of Christian doctrine. Another disastrous consequence for a normative Christian Dogmatics is its failure to establish an objective norm for its doctrinal statement, or for the determination of what is Christian. This question is simply that of authority. This idea, we have seen, is admittedly changed to a purely inner authority. But it involves a self-deception to suppose that the Gospel of Christ is the norm as well as the source of Dogmatics, as Wendt seems to do.³⁹ It is becoming more and more universally acknowledged that the Christ of a metaphysical dogma is the Christ not only of the Apostles but of

³⁸ Bousset, *Das Wesen der Religion*, 1903 pp. 257 ff.

³⁹ Wendt, *Syst. d. chr. Lehre*, I. 1906, pp. 44-54.

the Synoptists as we have them. It is evident, therefore, that there must be lurking behind this claim to find in "the Gospel of Christ" the norm of Christian dogma, some *a priori* norm to determine what constitutes this Gospel of Christ. Accordingly the usual position of theologians of this school as regards the source and norm of dogmatics is as follows: They all recognize in Schleiermacher the impulse to what they deem a more adequate view of this science. They criticise him, however, for finding the source of dogmatics in individual Christian experience. They find this source in what they call the Gospel or the revelation of Christ in the Scripture. But the norm of what is Christian is determined by their conception of authority which is admittedly inner or subjective, and is found in the Gospel as approving itself to Christian experience. Thus in each case the Scripture is after all really subordinated to Christian experience, and the normative character of Dogmatics in any objective sense rendered impossible.

This can be best seen by a very brief examination of the three most recent comprehensive treatises on Dogmatics which have come from this school—those of Kaftan, Haering, and Wendt, since they belong to the "right wing" and lay much stress upon Scripture. Thus Kaftan calls the Scripture the principle of knowledge in Dogmatics, and criticises Schleiermacher, Hofmann, and Frank for giving simply subjective reflections upon the Christian consciousness instead of normative doctrines.⁴⁰ Faith involves or is a knowledge of objective realities, and this faith-knowledge springs from revelation, and this revelation is recorded in Scripture. This sounds objective enough. In reality, however, Kaftan's position is not so far removed from that of Frank. Frank says that it is the chief task of systematic theology to set forth in their essence and relations the totality of the realities which have been certified to the Christian in

⁴⁰ Kaftan. *Dogmatik*, pp. 1-60; vid. especially Arts. "Zur Dogm." in *Zeitschr. f. Theol. u. K.* 1903. Compare also Schian, "Der Begriff Erfahrung in d. ev. Dogm., *Pr. Monatsh.* Jahrg. II. H. 10 pp. 378-389.

the appropriate way.⁴¹ In other words, Frank seeks to set forth the knowledge obtained through Christian experience. In the same way Kaftan, although he affirms that the Scripture is the sole principle of knowledge for Dogmatics, nevertheless affirms that the appropriation and evaluation of the content of Scripture is to be determined by faith, and that in dogmatics it is faith which mediates between Scripture and the dogmatic propositions. The real difference between Kaftan and Frank is after all one of relative emphasis on Scripture and Christian experience, the real norm being Christian experience. The same thing is true of Haering.⁴² He affirms that the revelation of God in Christ is the norm of Christian truth; that this revelation is in the Scripture which is in a certain sense authoritative. The nature of this normative character of Scripture is determined by the idea of revelation which is after all conceived as the inner consciousness awakened by Christ. Consequently Haering holds that the authority of Scripture extends only to matters of faith, and to them only in so far as it approves itself to faith. Thus the revelation in Christ is not the norm for Christian doctrine, but out of the contact with Christ there springs what Haering terms an inner appreciation of the Gospel which becomes confessedly the final norm for determining the Christian elements in Scripture. Precisely the same thing is true of Wendt, as we have seen.⁴³ Thus the final norm of Christian truth in each case is Christian experience, and the result is a subjectivity which is frankly admitted and called a "subjectivity of life" by Haering, but which is none the less destructive of the normative character of Christian dogmatics. In fact Herrmann, a member of this school, has shown in an article published this year as well as in another last year, that these faith-doctrines spring from personal experience, are individually conditioned, and that it involves a self-deception to

⁴¹ Frank, *Syst. d. christl. Wahrheit*, § 1.

⁴² Haering, *Der christl. Glaube (Dogmatik)*, 1906, pp. 145ff., 159ff., 172-179.

⁴³ Wendt, *op. cit.* pp. 44-54.

suppose that any normative doctrines can be drawn from Scripture, since those doctrines are the product of personal faith, and so individually conditioned.⁴⁴ Herrmann concludes that there can be no systematic statement of doctrine and no normative doctrines.

This again involves another serious consequence for Dogmatics. Not only is its norm found in Christian experience; this also becomes its subject-matter instead of God. It is true that God can be known only as He is revealed to faith. But the question is how God is revealed. Of course a theologian of the right wing of this school, such as Kaftan for example, emphasizes the fact that this faith-knowledge has to do with objects. Nevertheless the position logically results in conceiving of Dogmatics as the science of faith, thus doing away with its right to exist as a science distinct from religious psychology, a part of anthropology. For we have seen that Herrmann has shown the individually conditioned character of this faith-knowledge or faith-thought of Kaftan, and concludes that in so far as Dogmatics will claim any universality or normative validity for itself, it must cease to be the science of this so called faith-knowledge (*Glaubenserkenntnis*), and become the science of faith itself, whose chief task is, to use the language of Herrmann, "the comprehension of faith."⁴⁵ Dogmatics thus ceases to be a science distinct from certain branches of anthropology.

The conclusion to be drawn from all this is that if the principle of external authority in religious knowledge be abandoned, a normative science of dogmatic theology becomes impossible. It can not even continue within the meagre limits assigned to it by Herrmann. The logic of the situation must cut deeper still, as can be seen from the position of the school which follows the method of comparative religions.

⁴⁴ Herrmann, "Christl.-prot. Dogm.", *Kultur d. Gegenwart* I. Teil. Abt. 4. Lief. 3 pp. 583-630. Also "Die Lage u. Aufgabe d. ev. Dogm." part II "Die Aufgabe.", *Zeitschr. f. T. u. K.* Mai. u. Sept. 1907.

⁴⁵ Herrmann, *Vid. Art.* cited in *Kultur der Gegenwart* p. 620.

III. This school of theologians has followed the logic of abandoning the principle of external authority, and has shown the untenability of the Ritschlian claim as regards the absoluteness of Christianity, the special character of Christian revelation, and the normative character of Christian Dogmatics. Troeltsch is the representative of this school who has devoted most attention to the questions of theological prolegomena. In a series of articles in the *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* beginning in 1893 and covering about ten years, he has set forth his views over against the Ritschlians, especially Kaftan. In three works he has recently summed up and stated his views in opposition to the older Protestant apologetics and to that of the Ritschlian school, with a clearness and force which leave nothing to be desired.⁴⁶

One of the chief merits of Troeltsch is that he sets in clear light the only alternative left if the metaphysical supernaturalism of the older evangelical theology be abandoned. The Ritschlian separation of Christianity and Christian theology from metaphysics and from history he regards as impossible.⁴⁷ The problem of the relation of science and philosophy to religion, no longer has to do with a compromise between two separate quantities, but with the subsumption of a developing inner religious life under the categories and method of all scientific and historical method. All compromise methods of dealing with science and religion must be abandoned. By the Ritschlian separation between them, "science" was limited to the world of nature, and all that was done was to cut off its old head of natural theology, while faith proceeded to a practical judgment, not adequately grounded, that Christianity is the absolute religion resting on a special revelation, and out of connection

⁴⁶ Troeltsch, "Ueber historische u. dogmat. Meth. d. Theol.," in *Theologische Arbeiten aus dem Rheinischen wissensch. Prediger-Verein*, N. F. H. 4, 1900, pp. 87-108. *Die wissenschaftl. Lage u. ihre Anforderungen an die Theol.*, 1900. *Die Absolutheit des Christentums u. die Religionsgeschichte*, 1902.

⁴⁷ Cf. *Wissenschaftl. Lage u. s. w.* pp. 44ff.

with the rest of history. In this way no real advance is made over the position of the older apologetic. Indeed, according to Troeltsch, the Ritschlian is worse off since he has no metaphysics or natural theology, which would strengthen his position against attack, and no strict doctrine of authority which could justify the claims made for Christianity. In this respect Troeltsch finds the old Protestant doctrine much more consequent, because it rested its claim as to the absolute character of Christianity and the supernatural revelation which grounded this claim, upon a supernaturalistic metaphysics without which, Troeltsch says, the claims as to the finality of Christianity and the supernatural character of its revelation are like a knife without a handle and without a blade.⁴⁸ It is only upon the basis of such a metaphysical supernaturalism as contrasted with the Ritschlian idea of the supernatural character of Christianity, that it can be separated from other religions. In giving up the idea that God has revealed Himself in a directly supernatural manner, and in reducing the idea of the supernatural character of Christianity to its superior content merely, the Ritschlian is prohibited from assigning to Christianity a distinct place and from separating it from other religions. From this point of view all human religion has its roots in religious intuition or a divine revelation,⁴⁹ and the philosophy of religion will discover a similar religious consciousness in all.⁵⁰ Hence to separate Christianity or Christ from history is but a remainder of the dogmatic method. Theology must follow the method of the history of religions which is simply the particular application of scientific historical method in general. This method makes use of three principles—the use of historical criticism, analogy, and the correlation and mutual dependence of all historical phenomena, including those in the psychic sphere.⁵¹ Instead of a supposed independence of

⁴⁸ *Ueber hist. u. dog. Methode u. s. w.* p. 99.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁵⁰ *Wissenschaftl. Lage u. s. w.* p. 37.

⁵¹ *Hist. u. dogmat. Meth. u. s. w.* p. 89.

historical criticism, we have the frank adoption of a criticism absolutely determined by an avowedly naturalistic philosophy. This criticism operates by analogy which lays it down as a canon that all past history is to be judged as to its truth or probability by its analogy with our present experience; while the principle of correlation, being also determined by naturalism, says that all historical phenomena form one continuous and unbroken stream to the exclusion of everything absolute or supernatural.⁵² The scientific situation is expressed simply in the demand for the universal application of this method, which consequently must be applied to theology, and in its application makes three demands.⁵³ First, that Christianity be studied in its genetic connection with other religions. In this way a criterion will be obtained which will enable us to put all religions in an ascending scale with Christianity at the top. Secondly, that this historical and psychological study of religions advance from the comparison of religions to a philosophy of religion which will take a definite stand in regard to ultimate theological ideas. It is with these ideas that the real task of theology begins. It must show that religious faith is grounded in reality and that a divine revelation constitutes the kernel of all religions. Thirdly, that theology must state Christian faith thus determined in the light of modern science. In this way the old dogmas which were determined by the scientific culture of their age, are done away, and instead of an authoritative Dogmatics we have a religious metaphysic predetermined by the naturalism which lurked behind the rules of method. It is only a foregone conclusion, therefore, that the absoluteness of Christianity, supernatural revelation, and the deity of Christ must be abandoned, as is frankly done by Troeltsch.⁵⁴

⁵² *Ibid.* p. 94.

⁵³ *Wissenschaftl. Lage. u. s. w.* pp. 47-56.

⁵⁴ In his earlier writings Troeltsch held that Christianity was the absolute religion in the sense of being the highest development of religious life. He has abandoned this position, and in his essay, *Die Absolutheit des Christentums u. die Religionsgeschichte*, 1902, he seeks to show that the term absolute is full of inner contradictions, and

The consequences of this upon the idea and task of Dogmatics are not difficult to see, although they have not been stated at length by Troeltsch. In the place of a normative Dogmatics must be placed a naturalistic evolutionary philosophy of religion. This will give us the fundamental religious ideas. Then it can be pointed out that they find their purest embodiment in Christianity, and out of this point of view and study of religion will grow a "simple exposition of the Christian faith."⁵⁵ The results also upon the content of Christian Dogmatics are equally plain. Bousset has drawn them for us most vividly and frankly.⁵⁶ Everything is in continuous progress and evolution. The idea of salvation in the Scripture and the Church, the dogma of the deity of Christ, the doctrine of the Trinity, the notion of satisfaction and sacrifice,—all are antiquated. What remains? The simple Gospel of Jesus, Bousset replies. But even this is not to be simply taken from Jesus; it must be translated into the language and symbols of modern culture. Thus we are told that the belief of Jesus in the heavenly Father is retained, but that we are to translate it into our modern notions about God. In a word, in the place of the Gospel of Jesus we are to have the Gospel of naturalistic evolution.

This conception of the method and task of theology has performed the service of making perfectly plain the issue, and the presuppositions of the science of Dogmatic Theology; and upon this issue the possibility of this science depends. It will not suffice to attempt to refute these theologians by simply pointing out their inconsistencies. Some of the things springs from the Hegelian attempt to find the complete realization of the Absolute Idea in Christianity. This Troeltsch regards as impossible, since all history is relative, and hence the kernel can never be separated from the husk. Bousset (*Wesen d. Relig.* p. 237ff.) says that the future of Christianity is the future of religion, since the history of religion shows the "absolute superiority" of Christianity. But by this Bousset means simply with Troeltsch that Christianity is the highest point of the religious development of humanity.

⁵⁵ Troeltsch, Art. "Geschichte u. Metaphysik," *Zeitschr. für Theol. u. K.* 1898, p. 67.

⁵⁶ Bousset, *op. cit.* pp 258 ff, 261 ff.

which the Ritschlians have called inconsistencies are not really such. Thus Troeltsch knows perfectly well that his method of "evolutionary Idealism" is no mere historical method, but involves a faith in teleology. The norms, however, by which he judges this religious evolution are obtained from the comparative study of religion and thus claim to be more objective than those of the Ritschlians. Other objections, which are well grounded, have come from the Ritschlian camp, but they have not fully met the issue. Thus the late Prof. Reischle indicated the limits of this method, and also its dangers—among others, its tendency to haste in transmuting mere analogies into genetic and causal derivations, its overemphasis of the forms of religious life over against their content.⁵⁷ Moreover, he is perfectly justified in pointing out that a theology which departs so far from that of Christ can scarcely be called Christian. Nevertheless when he affirms that, allowing for the legitimate application of this so-called historical method, there still remains for Dogmatics the task of setting forth the eternal norms of Christian truth, he has simply reiterated the very point at issue. The possibility of such normative Christian truth depends upon the question of supernatural revelation. Has God intruded directly into the sphere of human life and thought in a supernatural manner? Has He spoken to man supernaturally and authoritatively by Prophets, Apostles, and by His Son? Or is revelation simply the product of the search after God by the human mind, to be called a divine revelation because God is revealed in all human thought, and because religion is not an illusion? This is the precise issue, and only upon the reality of a supernatural revelation in this highest sense is a science of Christian Dogmatics possible.

And not only is the issue here. Here also lies the real inconsistency of Troeltsch's procedure. The naturalistic metaphysic is made to appear as if it were not an *a priori* philosophy, but rather the result of the study of

⁵⁷ Reischle, *Theologie und Religionsgeschichte*, 1904, pp. 26ff.

comparative religion; whereas all along this naturalism was contained in the fundamental rules of method so that it was a foregone conclusion that it would again be read out of a so-called historical study which it had determined from the start. Why is it a fundamental postulate of historical science that the supernatural is excluded as impossible? Why is it assumed that all the theological sciences are historical disciplines? Why is it assumed that present experience is the absolute norm by which to judge of all the past experience of the human race? These are just the questions at issue, and they should not be assumed. In other words, this method which when applied is to yield as a result the naturalistic evolutionary idealism, is itself the product of an *a priori* metaphysical assumption. Troeltsch really acknowledges this, for he says that just as the dogmatic method proceeds upon a metaphysical basis, so the historical method springs from the metaphysical assumption of the "interconnection of the activities of the human spirit", by which he means simply to express the impossibility of supernatural revelation.⁵⁸ It is one thing for a scientific method to rest upon a metaphysical basis; it is quite a different thing for it to spring from an unwarranted *a priori* metaphysical assumption. Unless an absolutely naturalistic philosophy be true—and it cannot be true upon a truly theistic basis—the theology of this school is without adequate foundation.

Moreover, while we must agree with this school, as over against the Ritschlian rejection of natural theology, that the Christian revelation must find not only its starting point, but even the possibility of its being apprehended, in its organic relation to this natural theology due to man's religious nature which has been preserved by common grace, we believe that it is fundamentally wrong in supposing that there is a gradual evolution from lower forms of religion to Christianity. The lower forms of religion and religious knowledge do not represent a lesser degree of faith or knowledge merely, but are a degeneration wrought by sin in the natural knowledge of God. Dr. Kuyper has shown that

⁵⁸ Cf. *Historische u. dogm. Methode* p. 99.

the Christian religion and Paganism do not stand related to one another as higher and lower forms of the same development, but that while the Christian religion is a correcting of the effects of sin and hence a positive supplement and correction of natural theology, Paganism represents the development of natural theology in a negative direction.⁵⁹

Thus the vital question for Christian Dogmatics is whether a supernatural revelation is possible, and whether in Christianity and the Bible we have such a revelation. If these questions cannot be answered affirmatively, the principle of external authority must be given up, and we are left with a religious philosophy in place of the science of Dogmatic Theology.⁶⁰ Consequently Dogmatics presupposes and rests upon Apologetics, both philosophical and historical, and this latter science must give to the dogmatician the existence and knowability of God; the possibility of the directly supernatural mode of the divine activity; the supernatural character of the Christian revelation; and the Bible as the authoritative record of that revelation.

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⁵⁹ Kuyper, *op. cit.* p. 302.

⁶⁰ It should be noted, however, that the converse is also true, *i. e.*, that if a supernatural revelation be admitted, it will not be possible to maintain that the principle of authority is internal. Hence the attempt of Th. Kaftan (*Moderne Theol. des alten Glaubens*² 1906) to hold fast to supernatural revelation and at the same time conceive of the principle of authority as internal, is a mediating attempt which is not tenable. In the first place, we have seen how and why the correction of the noëtic effects of sin by supernatural revelation carries with it the principle of external authority; and in the second place, the form and content of Scripture revelation are inseparable, so that it is not possible for one who admits supernatural revelation in both facts and words to distinguish between the form and content, the human and divine, as Th. Kaftan does. Thus, the "old faith" of which there is to be a "modern theology" involves, as Kaftan himself states this faith, the "old theology". That Christ is the divine Son of God, the only mediator between God and man; that He rose from the dead and ever liveth; that we have His salvation through the work of the Holy Spirit,—what is all this but the "old theology"? For a criticism of Th. Kaftan and also of Grützmacher's "Moderne positive Theol." as set forth in the *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschr.* 1904, *vid.* Bousset, *Theol. Rundschau*, 1906, pp. 287-302, 327-340; 1907, pp. 1-18.