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## KIKUYU, CLERICAL VERACITY AND MIRACLES

Kikuyu, clerical veracity and miracles: it might seem that no three topics could bear less intrinsic relation to one another. In point of fact they are connected by very natural bonds, and it was inevitable that the controversy aroused by the publication of the Bishop of Zanzibar's open letter at the end of last year<sup>1</sup> should run rapidly through stages which raised successively the three issues of intercommunion, the sincerity of clerical engagements, and the supernatural origin of Christianity. The bomb-shell which Dr. Weston cast into the Anglican camp was thus like one of those fire-work bombs of Chinese concoction, which explode first into a serpent, out of which is at once extruded a noisome reptile, while from that in turn proceeds a fiery dragon. Each successive stage of the controversy cuts more deeply and uncovers more clearly the canker which lies at the root of much of our modern Church-life. The question raised in its first stage concerns only the limits of proper Christian communion; the issue in the second stage is just common honesty; while what is at stake in the third stage is the very existence of Christianity. The three issues are necessarily implicated in one another because they are only varying phases and interacting manifestations of

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<sup>1</sup>*Ecclesia Anglicana*. For what does she stand? An Open Letter to the Right Reverend Father in God, Edgar, Lord Bishop of St. Albans. By Frank, Bishop of Zanzibar. 1914. Some curious details as to the publication of this letter may be read in the Christmas (1913) number of *The Christian Warfare* (Talbot & Co.), the organ of the Catholic Literature Association.

The influence alleged does not necessarily denote identity of thought or expression, though such identity is frequently found in the citations given. It does mean a pronounced similarity in the idea and this same similarity often extends to the form of expression. There are, of course, important differences. Alcuin, for instance, makes use of Augustinian formulae on space and time without understanding them in the Augustinian sense (pp. 62-65). He uses the expression *Homo in deum transivit*, which is quite un-Augustinian (p. 105, note 1). They also diverge on the idea of the *proprietas* in the doctrine of the persons of the Trinity (p. 128). Scotus Erigena simply reproduced the Neo-Platonic elements of the Augustinian theology (p. 12). His Trinity was Greek (Alexandrian, Origenistic) rather than Augustinian (p. 74; cf. p. 84). His theory of creation totters between Augustinian and Neoplatonic influences, and is emanistic (pp. 77-79). Alcuin as well as his contemporaries, following Augustine, held to a verbal as distinguished from a real *communicatio idiomatum* (pp. 147-149, 156-7), and in this the theologians of the ninth century agreed with them (pp. 163-166). In the discussion of the absolute Being of God (pp. 9-20), we would have given more attention to Gottschalk.

In the preface (p. 3) the author observes that to the question: In what way Augustine's Theology, Trinitarianism, and Christology influenced the early mediaeval theologians? no satisfactory answer has yet been given, owing to the fact that there is as yet no sufficiently exhaustive (erschöpfend) material for such an investigation; and though, consequently, his study may seem premature, nevertheless he is convinced that the attempt should be made, and may be of use for a more accurate knowledge of the theological labors of that time. Any student of Augustine or of the *opera theologica* of the eighth and ninth centuries will be grateful for this penetrating research, and many will doubtless accept its conclusions (pp. 188-191) that both as to problems and methods the leading dogmaticians of the eighth and ninth centuries were the pupils of Augustine.

A few suggestions may be added by way of corrigenda. Is not *semper ternus* for "sempiternus" (p. 37, note 1)? Put "n" for "u" in "und" (p. vii., sec. 2a); in "augustinischen" (p. 84, line 16); in "pertinebant" (p. 95, line 3 in note). Read "gleicher" for "gleichber" (p. 88, l. 11); "Fleischwerdung" for "Eleischwerdung" (p. 93, l. 6); "non" for "mon" (p. 132, note 4); "stattgefunden" for "sttattgefunden" (p. 163, l. 7); "columba" for "columna" (p. 171, note 4, line 7). Omit the second "ad" (p. 165, note 2, line 4).

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## SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

*The Christian Faith: A System of Dogmatics.* By THEODORE HAERING, D.D., Professor of Theology in the University of Tuebingen.

Translated from the second revised and enlarged German edition, 1912, by John Dickie, M.A., Professor of Systematic Theology in Knox College, Dunedin, and George Ferries, D.D., author of "The Growth of Christian Faith." Two volumes, 8vo; pp. xii + xii, 952. Bibliography and Index. London and New York: Hodder and Stoughton. 1913.

Haering's *Der Christliche Glaube* was published in the autumn of 1906, and was briefly but sufficiently noticed in this REVIEW for January 1908 (pp. 166-7) by Dr. C. W. Hodge. The appearance of an English translation of its second edition—which was published in 1912—would in itself call for nothing more than an intimation of that fact, with some remarks, perhaps, upon the nature and extent of the changes introduced into the second edition, and the quality of the English rendering. On the former matter there is no need to enter into detail: the changes made are rather of the nature of expansions than of alterations. Of the latter matter we cannot speak with entire satisfaction. The sense of the original is doubtless conveyed in the translation. But the clearness with which the original was credited by its German readers ("marvellously perspicuous" is Titius' characterization of it) is certainly conspicuously absent from the translation; and all the charm which they also attribute to the book as a popular religious discussion is dissipated. We have found the reading of the English version somewhat heavy going.

An adventitious importance has been given to the English translation, however, by the unmeasured (and let us say at once, gravely misleading) praise which has, on the occasion of its appearance, been lavished on the treatise. An influential journal, widely circulated in both hemispheres, for example, announces it as "theology at its best". Had the proper qualification been inserted, and the book announced merely as Ritschlian theology at its best, little exception would need to be taken to the characterization. Haering's theology is exceptionally good Ritschlian theology. But no Ritschlian theology can be really good theology. Ritschlianism would not be unfairly described as the form taken in the later years of the nineteenth century by Socinianism, squeezed into the molds of Neo-Kantian philosophizing. And in the nature of the case, Socinian theology is bad theology, no matter in what philosophical garb—and, we may add, no matter with what religious fervor—it may be set forth. Haering brought to the exposition of Ritschlianism a warm religious nature, deeply steeped in Swabian Pietism, and, from the publication of his maiden-book (*Ueber das Bleibende im Glauben an Christus*, 1881), in the first days of "the movement" (the first literary symptom of the existence of "the school", was the publication in 1876 of Herrmann's *Der Metaphysik in der Theologie*), he has been diligently engaged in pouring the new wine into these old bottles. The wine has in the process no doubt taken on some of the flavor of the bottles, but the bottles have certainly burst. Despite the many modifications it has received at his hands,—all of them, happily, in the direction of a fuller recognition of essential Christian truth,—and despite the profoundly re-

ligious tone which he has cast over the whole exposition, what Haering gives us remains just Ritschlianism, and that is to say just Socinianism—Ritschlianism, Socinianism in the richest religious expression possible to them, perhaps, but Ritschlianism, Socinianism still.

When we say Ritschlianism, however, we say not only Socinianism but Socinianism in a decadent form. A quarter of a century has elapsed since Albrecht Ritschl died (1889), and the stir which his theological teaching began to make during the last decade of his life has already quieted down, and the movement which he inaugurated has largely merged in the general course of unevangelical thought. Perhaps it would be too much to say that his system has been already "relegated to the ineffectual past", for there still remain with us men of mark,—among whom Haering holds a conspicuous place—who have drawn a great part of their inspiration from it. But these are mostly men somewhat advanced in life; and it is not without its pathetic side to witness the publication by them, in their declining years, of system after system of a dogmatics, which, to put it brusquely, has had its day. There may not be wanting, indeed, some indications that the true state of the case is not altogether concealed from themselves, and that, in presenting their several transcripts of the Ritschlian system, they write consciously as much as historians of thought as they do as religious teachers. Haering, for example, not only makes no pretence of writing "definitive dogmatics", but even asserts roundly that there cannot be any such thing: "the dogmatics of any one generation", he repeatedly declares, "comes in the next to belong only to the history of dogma" (e.g. p. 31). He has even erected what he calls "the mutability of dogmatics" itself into a dogma, and finds for it crisp gnomical expression. "Theologies," he remarks (*Z ThK*, xx, 1910, p. 166), "change as doth a garment, and only the gospel abides."

In utterances like this there is obviously betrayed, however, much more than mere distrust of the permanence of one's own system in act of being expounded. What is uncovered is a veritable despair of dogmatics as such; or, to put it in its true light, a profound disbelief in the real—or "universal" as it is fashionable to phrase it—validity of what is yet somewhat oddly called religious knowledge. It is the same point of view which finds expression in the rampant individualism of Haerberlin's declaration that the results of dogmatics "can never be the same for all theologians, just because and so long as the forms of piety which are described are not the same" (*Schw. Th. Z.* xxiii, pp. 17 ff.); or in Herrmann's even more disintegrating representation, which not only gives to each man his own necessarily peculiar dogmatics but will not permit any man to have a self-consistent dogmatics even for himself, since each several one of his "ideas (*Gedanken*) of faith" will necessarily bear traces of the peculiar occasion out of which it individually arose (*Kultur der Gegenwart*, I, 4, pp. 625, 615). The root of these disturbing deliverances is pointed out by Herrmann himself when he warns his brother Ritschlians off from the notion that a universally valid expression of

faith is possible, on the ground of the inseparable correlation of that assumption with that conception of revelation which sees in it a supernatural communication of truth (*Z Th K*, xvii, 1907, p. 29). Only an objective revelation of truth can supply a basis for an objectively valid dogmatics. And as the Ritschlians will not have an objective revelation of truth, they are in no position to give us anything better than individualistic, which is to say, subjective dogmatics.

Haering, of course, as a good Ritschlian points to revelation as the source of all religious knowledge. But to Haering, of course, as to his fellow Ritschlians, revelation is not "propositional" but purely "personal". To Christians at least (p. 144), it is summed up in the "personal life" of Christ (p. 293). Nothing can exceed the emphasis with which Haering insists upon this. "The revelation of God in Christ," he tells us (p. 262), "is the source, norm and basis of all Christian religious knowledge." Again (p. 317), "The revelation of God in Christ is the ground and norm of all religious knowledge." Further (p. 317), "As revelation is the ground, so is it the norm of Christian knowledge of God as regards its content and compass, as well as its nature." As regards its content, God is what He reveals Himself to faith in Christ as being. As regards its compass, God is nothing except what He is according to His revelation of Himself in Christ. The Christian *Glaubenserkenntnis* is, in a word, as is repeatedly asserted, *ganz und gar* the knowledge of the revelation of God in the "personal life" of Christ. No mode of statement is omitted which could emphasize the exclusiveness of the personal revelation in Christ as the source of Christian religious knowledge. But as this revelation is "personal" and not "propositional" it requires to be interpreted. The instrument by which the personal revelation of God in Christ is received and translated into religious knowledge is described as "faith". Sometimes, indeed, Haering speaks of the revelation in Christ as if it directly produced "faith": "the revelation of God in our religion," he says (p. 201), "is a revelation which produces faith, i.e. trust." But this is at once varied to the somewhat different form of statement, that God's "revelation consists in a self-attestation capable of producing faith". What is meant is apparently that God's manifestation of Himself in Christ is of such a sort that faith may find a basis for the knowledge of God in it—if it will. For Haering is very jealous of what he looks upon as the "freedom" of faith, and will not have the knowledge of God thrust upon any man by sheer revelation. In his view there are therefore two factors which must coöperate in the production of religious knowledge,—Revelation and Faith: and only in their conjunction can religious knowledge arise. "It is a revelation which faith has to interpret, and it is faith which has to interpret the revelation" (p. 421). Revelation alone cannot give religious knowledge; and, though neither can faith alone give it, yet it is faith which works up into knowledge what in revelation is only the raw materials for it. If without revelation there is no object of knowledge, without faith there is not only no

subject able to assimilate this knowledge, but no "knowledge" as yet to be assimilated. Religious "knowledge" is the product of a voluntary "faith" working upon a "revelation" which at the most is a mere "manifestation". On the face of it, here is a purely subjective theory of religious knowledge.

Haering, it is true, makes some effort to escape from this subjectivity; to avoid making faith, in effect, the creator of its own object. We find him, for example, vigorously asserting that "judgments of value", in the sense in which that concept is employed by him and his fellows, include in themselves "judgments of being". He strongly protests, indeed, against the representation that a value-judgment leaves the reality of the object of it undetermined (pp. 65 ff.). He protests further against the representation that the reality of its object is affirmed only on the ground of its value; that it is, in other words, an assumption or postulate resting on subjective experience. This appears to mean that a judgment of value presupposes the recognition of the reality of the object whose value is affirmed, and the recognition of it on some other ground than its value. Nevertheless, when an instance in point comes under discussion, and we are told dutifully (p. 67) that "the validity of judgments of faith"—here the judgment of value concerning God—"depends on the living conviction that the supreme reality in question"—that is, God—"manifests itself"—it is at once added, "but only to one who consents to recognize its reality as of value for him personally, not in the irresistible way in which the laws of logic demand recognition". The fat is obviously again in the fire. The will is brought in as the decisive factor in conviction: such a conviction is distinctively a voluntary conviction, and in this differs from the conviction wrought by logical reasoning, which, in contrast with it, is a compulsory conviction. This surely implies that the conviction in question is purely personal,—that is to say "subjective"—and cannot impose itself on another,—that is to say is not of universal validity. On what grounds could we impose on others convictions which even with ourselves we recognize as not imposed but as voluntary? Another, obviously, shares such convictions, if he shares them at all, also only voluntarily; that is by a purely personal, subjective act. The process by which the individual obtains a religious conviction, then, it would seem, is that by a voluntary act he recognizes value for himself in the object before his mind; and when it thus, by this voluntary act on his part, acquires value to him, it becomes "real" to him in a "living conviction". On the face of it, this is an extraordinary thing for it to do. But in any case, have we not here a purely subjective process? The ground adduced for the alleged reality of the object certainly appears to be its recognized value to the subject. And that value surely to all appearance is attributed to the object, not because of any compulsion of recognized fact, but by a voluntary act of the subject's own. That a "living conviction" of "reality" can arise in this fashion is sheerly incredible. All convictions, of whatever kind, are the product of course of evidence, and are not producible at will; and each con-

viction naturally rests on evidence fitted to produce that particular conviction. Judgments of being must rest, therefore, on evidence of reality, not on "recognition of value"; as indeed we have seen Haering himself compelled to allow—in words.

These remarks have brought us to the center of Haering's doctrine of Faith. It is not easy, to be sure, to determine precisely what he means by faith, despite the fundamental place held by this conception in his system. One reads the inordinately long Apologetical Introduction to his treatise with suspended mind, looking, and ever looking in vain, for some clear definition of the exact sense in which the ever-recurring "faith" is employed; and the want is not supplied even in the section of the Dogmatic part of the volume which expressly treats of Faith. It emerges, however, with sufficient clearness that faith is with Haering distinctively "voluntary conviction". It is without significance for our present point that he sometimes broadens his definition so as to include feeling as well as volition in the source of faith; as in the (for the elucidation of Haering's view) pregnant sentence: "Faith, on the ground of determinations (*Entscheidungen*) of the volitional and emotional spirit, in coöperation with the historical self-revelation of God, is sure of a reality which is inaccessible to theoretic understanding (*Erkennen*), compulsory knowledge (*zwingendes Wissen*)" (p. 257). As "voluntary conviction", he is never weary (as in the sentence just quoted) of setting "faith" over against "compulsory knowledge", a thoroughly misleading opposition (*cf.* the, no doubt insufficient, strictures of Titius, *Theologische Rundschau*, 1907, p. 378), which nevertheless forms the hinge of his whole treatment. According to this distinction, convictions which we cannot choose but have are knowledge; convictions which we have or not as we choose are faith. He even occasionally falls into the unhappy habit of setting "knowledge" and "faith" unqualifiedly in contradiction to one another, as if either we could believe what we know to be false, or that need not be true which we know. Thus in speaking of reservation in prayer with respect to earthly things, he remarks (p. 536), "It does not spring from faith, but from fear of the power of knowledge"; and again he tells us (p. 540) that certain reservations in defining miracles result from a feeling that "a decision on this point has already been pronounced from another quarter, from the side of knowledge." In such contrasts "faith" is in danger of appearing purely arbitrary. In any event Haering makes its complete voluntariness so of its essence that he exhibits an almost morbid fear lest its "freedom" should be curtailed. "Compulsion", he declares (p. 209) "is the greatest enemy of all faith." God can propound faith to us, but He cannot produce it in us: He can only ask, "whether we bestow our faith on Him in Jesus", "whether we are willing to let ourselves be laid hold of by His love revealed in Jesus". So alien is compulsion to faith, indeed, that it is laid down as axiomatic, that "in the interest of faith", there cannot be any revelation which "compels assent on grounds of logical necessity"; and even that "there cannot be any testimony to" a revelation, "so homogeneous in itself

and so uniformly authoritative, that it is not left to the believing community to fix the grade of authority which shall belong to each part of the record". The very nature of the divine revelation with which faith deals is thus accommodated to the nature of faith as necessarily voluntary: God Himself cannot "rush" the jealously guarded defences of its voluntariness. In the sphere of knowledge, in a word, compulsion may rule—we must accept what presents itself to us as true: throughout the whole realm of faith, freedom reigns—what we accept here we accept at our own option. Faith thus comes forward in Haering's system as a contribution which we ourselves bring to the production of religious knowledge. There can be no religious knowledge without faith, and faith lies in our own power. Whatever religious knowledge we have we work up at our own option out of non-compulsory materials. The function of faith in the production of religious knowledge is, indeed, so magnified that it almost seems at times as if it were supposed to bring something to its objects which lends them a reality not possessed by them in themselves.

This is not to be obscured by representing what is meant as merely that it is only to religious susceptibility that religious data appeal. It has become quite common nowadays to say that the whole object of Ritschl and his followers in their doctrine of "value-judgments" and "faith" is to maintain that only one with religious susceptibility is competent to form a judgment in religious matters. If this were the case, certainly no writers could write more misleadingly or indeed more trivially. No one has ever doubted that only a religious being can apprehend religious truth, as no one has ever doubted that only a moral being can apprehend moral truth; or—to push the matter to its conclusion—that only a rational being can apprehend truth at all. It requires as special an endowment to know that two and two make four as it does to apprehend the excellence of virtue or to perceive the beauty of holiness. But that it is not this truism which Ritschl and his followers wish to express by their doctrines of "value-judgments" and "faith" is plain from the circumstance that it does not cover the ground claimed by their contentions. We do not need to go further here than to ask what becomes then of this immense emphasis on the voluntariness of faith? Our religious susceptibility is not subject to the control of will. Does the susceptibility which responds to the moral quality of a virtuous act, or which, say, is sensitive to the music of a sonata of Beethoven, either exist or not, only at our option? By virtue of the presence of the susceptibility in the subject the object is apprehended more adequately than otherwise it would be—that is all. Nothing is apprehended which is not "there" independently of its apprehension, and no increase of reality is brought to the object by its more complete apprehension. Value judgments, judgments of appreciation, in other words, are not substitutes for judgments of being but supplements to them: they are superinduced on them and make only for more adequate knowledge of what is already less adequately known on other grounds.

The blight of Haering's conception of faith as an essentially voluntary act affects his whole system, and vitiates even his most promising concessions to an objectively valid Christianity. The function he assigns to revelation, for example, as a factor in the production of religious knowledge carries with it necessarily a strong assertion of the actual historical existence of Jesus Christ, the personal revelation of God; and an equally strong assertion of the historical trustworthiness of our records of Him. Haering therefore explicitly recognizes that, since Jesus Christ is the source and basis of Christian faith, "for all others than those contemporary with that historical revelation which produces faith, there must be historical primary sources of information (*geschichtliche Urkunden*, 'historical records') regarding it" (p. 279). Though he does not go the length of Kähler's "whole Biblical Christ", in positing the object of faith, he cannot satisfy himself with Herrmann's meagre and vague "inner life of Jesus". He argues that we must be historically assured of much about Jesus before He can serve as a revelation of God to us. To Kähler's astonishing declaration that there is not a single fact concerning the historical Jesus of which we can be historically sure, he opposes the recognition that "a certain measure of historical credibility (*Glaubwürdigkeit*) is indispensable, and its place can be taken by no amount (*Gewalt*) of religious value" (p. 281). That Jesus may work upon us as a revelation of the love of God we must know Him; and to know Him—seeing that He is a historical figure—we must have trustworthy historical accounts of Him. Haering even goes so far as to include in the trustworthy historical knowledge that we must have of Him, the knowledge of Him as the conqueror of death. He therefore makes the trustworthiness of the accounts of the "resurrection" of Jesus—as to the "fact" of it only, however, not as to its "mode", as he too explains in the customary effort to deny the resurrection while seeming to allow it—necessary to the creation of Christian trust in the complete sense. Indeed, he seems almost inclined to throw his circle out more widely still, and to bring (contrary to his fundamental principle) the preparatory "revelation" of the Old Testament itself into the compass of the grounds of faith, and even the march of God's providence in the world, and nature itself,—when viewed from "the storm-free center of the revelation of Jesus". But no sooner do we begin to congratulate ourselves on such apparently notable concessions than we are rudely called back to the qualifications which eviscerate them all.

If Haering is willing to say flatly that "it is all over with faith" if it can be shown that "Jesus is only a creature of faith" (p. 217), he will not say that faith cannot exist unless it can be shown that Jesus is not a creation of faith: he will allow that "knowledge" can destroy "faith", he will not allow that "faith" needs the aid of "knowledge", or indeed can profit by "knowledge". No sooner does he declare, then, that faith requires the historicity of Jesus for its validity than he begins to qualify. We must ask after the measure of historical trustworthiness which history can supply, and which

faith may demand. And Haering's contention is that history can neither supply nor faith ask certainty,—but only probability. No doubt, he sometimes speaks as if he were only denying that history can supply or faith demand precise "demonstration", in the strict sense of that word as the designation of a mode (not degree) of proof. But his real meaning goes further than that. "If the tradition concerning Jesus possessed compelling credibility (*zwingende Glaubwürdigkeit*)" he argues (p. 217), "we should have what we have elsewhere had to renounce in the name of faith, on account of faith's very nature,—that intelligent men would be compelled to believe, or rather, not to believe, but to recognize as indisputable fact. On the contrary, there is no such compulsion in the sphere of history, so soon as we pass beyond the establishment of external facts and simple connections". The statement is, perhaps, not perfectly clear in all its suggestions; but this much seems plain—history does not yield facts which intelligent persons, conversant with the historical evidence, are compelled to accept as facts—beyond at least certain external facts in their external connection. History presents to us (beyond this) only data which we may (however intelligent and however well-informed historically) accept or reject with good conscience—at our option.

History does not make, for example, the reality of Jesus Christ,—such a Jesus Christ as may be recognized as a revelation of the love of God—so certain that every intelligent man, conversant with the historical evidence, must assent to it as indisputable. All that history can bring us, as Haering goes on to explain (p. 218), is a sufficiently high probability (*Wahrscheinlichkeit*) to enable the "religiously susceptible" "to surrender themselves to the impression of this person" "with a good conscience". If the religiously susceptible man makes this venture of faith, he may indeed attain through this to a certainty of the existence of this Jesus. But assuredly, then, the certainty he thus attains is the product of his faith, not of the historical evidence,—since, says Haering, this certainty "but for that surrender would be unattainable" (p. 218). We seem here perilously near to making Jesus—the Jesus in whom we find the revelation of the love of God—"only the creation of faith": and, in that case, Haering himself being witness, "it is all over with faith". Haering does, indeed, go on to say that the purely historical evidence of the existence of this Jesus must be sufficient to compel the man who will not accept it "to admit, in order to maintain his good historical conscience, that he is kept from giving his assent, not by compelling grounds of a historical character, but by a theory of the universe opposed to the Christian" (p. 218). Apparently this means that though there cannot be compelling grounds in history for affirming that Jesus existed—the Jesus in which faith sees the revelation of the love of God—neither must there be compelling grounds discoverable in history for affirming that He did not exist. History is not to say the decisive word as to the fact, one way or the other. All that can be asked of history—all that history can give—is room for believing in Jesus, on other grounds,—grounds apparently of "religious susceptibility". Historical evidence cannot

establish it; but historical evidence must not exclude it. It may be proper to ask here how the history which cannot give compelling evidence of the existence of such a Jesus, can be supposed to be possibly able to give compelling evidence that He did not exist. Are not these equally historical facts? If we deny that history is capable of making the existence of such a character certain, do we not in that very act deny that it is capable of making His non-existence certain? And is not the upshot simply then, that history cannot give any certainty in such a matter at all; and our actual conviction with respect to it, whether positive or negative—must rest upon and be the product of our own subjectivity? In a word, does not Haering appear here in a purely anti-historical rôle? What, then, becomes of his theory of religious knowledge, which requires for its production the two factors of "revelation" and "faith"? If the "revelation" itself depends for its reality on the "faith"; and without "faith" can be looked upon only as a possibility not absolutely refuted by objective historical evidence—are we not on the plane of a pure subjectivity? Is not, in any express sense the Jesus in which "faith" finds the revelation of the love of God, in that case, the creation of "faith" itself?

We have other misgivings also about the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, upon which Haering hangs the entirety of the Christian's religious knowledge. We can for our own part cheerfully allow that the revealing Christ is more convincingly accessible to us in the historical records than Haering will admit. We could grant him what he cannot accept from us, then,—a thoroughly trustworthy access to Christ. But how can we be assured that the holy love of God is revealed to us in this Christ's "personal life"? Haering scouts all external evidence, such as that of miracles and the like, and presents instead this: "the drawing near on God's part in a historical personality must prove itself real, through God's inmost being revealing itself in his whole life and work" (p. 204-5). We are to know that this life and work is a revelation of God (otherwise unknown) not because it is convincingly attested as such, but just because "God's inmost being reveals itself in the whole life and work". Circular reasoning could scarcely be more bold. How can we know that God's inmost being is revealed in this person's whole life and work, unless we already know God and know what His inmost being is? And what in that case becomes of our complete dependence on the revelation in Christ for our knowledge of the God of holy love? Haering continues: "God's will of love towards sinners must confront us in the work of this personality in a manner so effectual that His work can be explained as the work of God, and consequently excite in us trust in the love of God". But how can we recognize God's will of love for sinners in the work of this personality unless we previously know of God's will of love for sinners? The question becomes indeed a very pressing one, on Haering's ground, What reason have we for believing that God is love?—though he gives us to understand that the entirety of his theology is summed up in that proposition. According to Haering we can know nothing of God

except by revelation, and this revelation is for Christians (for non-Christians there are hints that a substitute may be found) wholly included in the personal life of Christ. Not in what Christ teaches, nor in the details of what He did: but in the general drift of His life as historically transmitted to us (in a probable record) and received in a religiously susceptible soul. But how can this general drift of Jesus' life, even though transmitted to us with entire trustworthiness in history, reveal even to the religiously susceptible that God is love? On Evangelical ground the revelation of the love of God in Christ is clear enough; for herein in love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins; for God commendeth His own love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. But on Haering's ground? On Haering's ground we have no other reason for believing that God is love, except that Jesus Christ lived and wrought in that firm belief—if indeed we can assure ourselves, amid the uncertainties of historical testimony, that He did so live and work. It is as subject of faith,—Himself exercising perfect trust in God—that He becomes the producer of faith in us. We believe that God is love for no other reason than that Jesus believed that God is love. Is it more than a case of spiritual contagion? And is such spiritual contagion enough to base our whole hope in life and death upon? Haering is perfectly right when he declares that we can postulate "pardoning love" to the Righteous God as a fact, only on the basis of an actual revelation. But he will admit no revelation in word. Where, on his ground—without any Divine Son of God and without any Atonement wrought in His blood—do we get any actual revelation in fact of the pardoning love of God? In his view Jesus was sinless: how, in his "personal life"—not in His teaching—does He manifest to us specifically "the pardoning love" of God?

Obviously we are at the center of Haering's Christology when we raise such questions. Like all good Ritschlians it is the work of Christ which chiefly interests Haering and he accordingly (like all the rest) begins with it, and only infers from what he supposes Christ to do, what he is willing to allow that Christ is. The work of God is all included for him in this—that He reveals God to us as holy love, though, as we have seen, it puts him on his metal to make out that He does this. Of course, every body knows that from the beginning Haering has stood out among the Ritschlians as the one among them all who was striving to formulate the most adequate doctrine of Atonement. Gustave Ecke, pointing out the shortcomings of the teaching of Ritschl and Gottschick (the most completely Ritschlian of the Ritschlians) feels able to speak of "the surmounting of these shortcomings by Haering". And indeed Haering must be given the credit of having made effort after effort to find some "objective aspect" for Christ's work on Ritschlian assumptions (*Ueber das Bleibende im Glauben*, 1880; *Zu Ritschls Versöhnungslehre*, 1888, *Zur Versöhnungslehre*, 1893). What he has put forward with this end in view, however, he has had steadily to retract (a fair

brief account of the course of his thought here may be read in Bensow, *Die Lehre von der Versöhnung*, 1904, pp. 106 ff.), until in the present volumes not a vestige—or perhaps we may say literally just a vestige—of it remains. He still divides the work of Christ, viewed as regards its content, into His prophetic and His priestly work; and describes the former as wrought by Christ “as God’s personal Revelation of Himself for us”, and the latter as wrought by Him as “our Representative before God”. He thus appears as still fain to discover some Godward side to Christ’s work. But he discovers none. The best he can do is to represent that God is pleased with the perfection of Christ’s revelation of His holy love to men. How this redounds to our credit remains meanwhile, as Wendt points out (*Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 1907, 23. coll. 646-7), unexplained; and we may add inexplicable.

As Haering still speaks thus of a “priestly” work of Christ, in which He “represents” us before God, so, continuing his careful use of old categories which have lost all their content to him (he actually orders his treatise on the Trinitarian categories of “Faith in God the Father”, “Faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God,” “Faith in the Holy Spirit of God and Christ”, though he does not in the least believe in the Trinity), he still speaks also of a “kingly” work of Christ. His exposition of the work of Christ is thus cast in the familiar molds of His office-work as Prophet, Priest and King, while yet there is assigned to Him none other than His “prophetic” work. The Kingly work of Christ is the work of the exalted Christ, and that Haering throws stress on this work of the exalted Christ stamps him at once as belonging to the Ritschlian “Right”. Though he thus asserts his belief in a continued saving work for the exalted Christ, however, Haering is careful not to let it be supposed that he considers such a belief an essential element of the Christian religion: he thus preserves a place among good Christians for his fellow Ritschlians of the “Left”, who will not hear of any saving work for the “hidden” exalted Christ (p. 660). And in his own Ritschlian fear of mysticism (no “Christ Mysticism” for him) he is careful to confine this work of the exalted Christ within very narrow limits and not to permit it to add anything of importance to His work on earth—not advancing here in substance of teaching beyond what he had already taught in his earliest work (1881). When he describes “the work of the exalted Lord” as consisting solely “in the fact that He makes His historical work on earth operative” (it is meanwhile not made clear *how* He does this), he is only remaining true to the necessary implications of Christ’s saving work as he conceives it, which he makes to consist wholly in the revelation of the love of God to us through His trustful life in complete recognition of that love.

When we think of the exalted Christ we naturally think of that Resurrection by which, according to the Scriptures, He entered upon His glory. Haering’s dealing with the Resurrection is very characteristic. He adverts to it twice (pp. 211 ff. 627 ff.), and then leaves us not quite certain what he believes with respect to it. He allows that

it is essential to complete Christian faith to hold that, when the disciples "saw the Lord, they were not self-deceived, that He actually showed Himself to them as the Living One" (p. 211). All theories of merely "subjective vision" must then be rejected (p. 629). Beyond this, however, he will not go. He too wishes to draw a distinction between "the fact" and "the mode" of the resurrection; and thus to cover up the actual denial of all "resurrection" by those who talk of an "objective vision"—or, as Haering prefers to phrase it, "a vision which has an objective basis". His chief concern is that all should agree that it is unimportant what we think became of the dead body, so only we understand that the person Jesus did not at death pass wholly out of existence—as if we could talk of a "resurrection" of what never died, or as if Jesus' disciples required assurance that He, like other men, still lived after that experience which we call death. We may infer that Haering attaches great importance to this attitude towards the question of our Lord's resurrection from the circumstance that he repeats it in his booklet, called *Persönlich-Practisches aus der christlichen Glaubenslehre* (1911), and there expresses his thanks to his theological friend Max Reischle for "well-considered and pious words" on "the mode and manner" of the resurrection of Christ, to which "nothing essentially new has been added since" (p. 108). What Reischle has to say on the matter, however, whether in his articles in the seventh and eighth volumes of the *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* or in his later *Christliche Glaubenslehre in Leitsätzen* (edition 2, 1902) is merely that while the resurrection experiences of the disciples cannot be scientifically proved not to have been a delusion, yet they are assured facts of faith, though even to faith "the question as to the *how*" of them remains unanswerable. That is to say we can be sure only "that the crucified One really lives as the Lord of His kingdom and revealed Himself to His disciples as the Living One". What Haering thinks so fine in Reischle, therefore, is only, his teaching that we cannot be sure that Christ ever rose from the dead, but we need not concern ourselves about that—all that is important is that His spirit did not die with the body and has entered into His glory.

With the idea of the exalted Christ there is associated the thought of prayer to Him, and Haering is accordingly led at this point to face this question (p. 665). He treats it with the chary caution with which he deals with all such matters. He permits us to pray to Christ; but he adds: "All invocation of Jesus is adoration of God who is revealed to us in Him." That is to say, we do not invoke Jesus as He is Himself God, but only as an intermediary through whom God reaches us and we Him. The notion has its affinities with Karl Thieme's insistence that Christ deserves our adoration because of His "representative unity" with God.

With this introduction Haering proceeds formally to discuss the "Divinity of Christ" (pp. 667 ff.). He is willing for Himself to employ the term, "Divinity" of Christ,—but only as an indication that "saving faith" embraces God and Jesus in one act of confidence; and

so, "in the view of saving faith" Jesus "belongs on the side of God". But, we may add, no more truly than "as He who reveals God, He belongs really to us" (p. 669). Just because He is the revelation of God, we are told, He "is not God; otherwise He would not be a revelation of God" (p. 670). Accordingly, throughout the whole treatise, Jesus is treated frankly as a human being, in his nature not different from us, His brethren.

It would naturally be supposed that with this view of Jesus' nature, Haering would make as short work of the notion of the pre-existence of Christ as, say, his fellow Ritschlian, H. H. Wendt, in his contemporaneously published *System der Christlichen Lehre*, whose "Dynamistic Monarchianism" differs from Haering's only in its greater frankness of expression. Strange to say, however, Haering appears to feel compelled to attribute some sort of preëxistence to Jesus. We say he appears to do so; for despite the somewhat lengthy discussion given to the matter, it is not made perfectly clear. He speaks of the preëxistence of Christ as one of the *Grenzgedanken unsrer Glaubenserkenntnis*, "limitative-notions of our faith-knowledge"—a truly Germanic phrase which our translators render, not with complete lucidity, "conceptions which mark the limit of the knowledge which we have of faith" (p. 695). Precisely what Haering means by a "limitative-notion" is not, however, obvious, and little light is thrown upon it by his explanations (pp. 704 ff.). These close with these words: "The *logical right* of the notion may be maintained by its friends in the measure in which they take it seriously that it is really a limitative-notion, one which surpasses the power of our knowledge—this being understood in the sense of the theory of knowledge of the Critical Philosophy, which does not maintain limits of knowledge arbitrarily but recognizes those that really lie therein" (p. 706). We are apparently referred here to Kant, who employs the term—or rather its cognate, *Grenzbegriff*—on a single occasion, of "the inconceivable something behind the phenomenon". "Finally, however, the possibility of such *noumena* is wholly incomprehensible, and what lies outside the sphere of phenomenon is (for us) empty, that is, we have an understanding which extends itself *problematically* further than that, but no intuition (*Anschauung*),—and not even a conception of a possible intuition, by means of which objects outside the field of sensibility are given to us and the understanding can extend beyond this in an *assertory* way. The concept (*Begriff*) of a noumenon is therefore only a limitative-concept (*Grenzbegriff*), intended to confine the claims of sensibility within proper bounds, and therefore only of negative use. It is nevertheless not arbitrarily invented, but hangs together with the limitations of the sensibility—without being able to posit anything positive beyond the limits of the sensibility" (*Kritik d. rein. Vernunft*,<sup>1</sup> p. 255). Accordingly, Rudolf Eisler (*Wörterbuch d. Philosophischen Begriffe*, 1910, I, p. 462) tells us that "Kant understands by a limitative-conception (*Grenzbegriff*) a conception which sets limits to, circumscribes, the claims of sensibility, and which at the same time leads to the limits of our knowledge, inasmuch as it

posits something to thought without being able to define it qualitatively, positively". For himself, Eisler broadly defines limitative-conceptions (*Grenzbegriffe*) as "conceptions which contain as content the existence of a transcendent object, without embracing (adequately) along with that its qualities; or conceptions which lead to the confines of the knowledge whose contents are valid at once for the subjective and for the objective reality". If we are to be governed by these definitions, it would seem that we must understand Haering, in representing the preëxistence of Christ as a limitative-notion, to be declaring it something which we must declare to be real, while yet we renounce all claim to comprehend what it is.

But if we will turn to the discussion of the same matter by Otto Kirn (*Grundriss der Evangelischen Dogmatik*, ed. 1, 1905, p. 92; ed. 2, 1906, p. 99; ed. 3, 1910, p. 107),—with whom in general Haering shows strong affinities—we will discover that the representation of the preëxistence of Christ as a limitative-conception (*Grenzbegriff*) is consistent, among Ritschlian theologians, with denial of, not its comprehensibility merely, but its reality as well. The passage is instructive enough to justify giving it in its entirety. "The Logos idea" says Kirn, "contains thus the ultimate explanation of the historical manifestation of Christ; but it gives us no knowledge of *His pre-historic being*. Logos means revelation, and the revelation of God to us belongs to history. The attempt to speculate upon the hypostatic distinction of the Logos from the Father, leads inevitably to subordinationistic ideas which do not do justice to the Christian faith. For only communion through Jesus Christ with God—in the most unlimited sense of the word—preserves to the Christian revelation its absoluteness and to the Christian salvation its certainty. The *Sonship of Christ* to God also enables us to illuminate the life-connection of the historical Jesus with God, but not the eternal, intra-divine life-process which forms the basis of the historical redemptive revelation. The attempt to pass beyond these limits, such as is made by means of the notion of the eternal generation of the Son yields nothing further, but only reduplicates the faith-knowledge oriented to history. The idea of *preëxistence* forms therefore a limitative conception (*Grenzbegriff*) of our theological thought. It declares that the historical Christ has eternally His central and universal place in God's will of salvation, and that the content of His life, His redemptive holy love, comes from God and is an eternal content of the supernatural life of God. We would, therefore, more correctly speak of the *super-historical* character of the revelation of God in Christ than of the *pre-historical* existence of Christ with the Father." Here the preëxistence of Christ is represented as a "limitative-conception" and yet explained as only "ideal", as the phrase goes. An elaborate argument is devoted to showing precisely that Christ did not exist "really" before His earthly career began. It does not follow, therefore, that Haering intends to represent the preëxistence as real, from the mere fact that he calls it a "limitative-notion".

Nor are all our hesitations at once dissipated by the circumstance

that Haering explicitly speaks of it as "real". The Ritschlians (perhaps Haering conspicuously among them) are so accustomed to employ phraseology consecrated by long usage in novel senses or in new applications, that it behoves us to scrutinize their language closely before accepting it in what may seem to us its obvious meaning. Not to go beyond this very matter of the preëxistence of Christ, H. H. Wendt, on the low ground of his frankly acknowledged Dynamistic Monarchianism, can still find an element of truth in the doctrine of the preëxistence of Christ, and can still speak of this preëxistence as "real" not "ideal". "We have," he remarks, "merely not to refer the idea of real, eternal preëxistence to the historical man Jesus Christ as a whole, but to that which was divine in Him, to the Holy Spirit which He bore in Himself. And this eternal preëxistence of the Holy Spirit is not a *personal* preëxistence, like that of the Logos in the Athanasian conception. *Real* preëxistence, was not possessed by the 'Son'. For 'Son' of God is not the Holy Spirit but the personal man Jesus in which the Holy Spirit showed Himself operative. Of this man we can only affirm *ideal* preëxistence; that He as mediator of the redemptive revelation, which was to lead to the establishment of the Kingdom of God, belonged to the eternal redemptive plan of God and was the object of God's loving prevision and provision" (*System der Christlichen Lehre* II, 1907, p. 579). It is no doubt sufficiently bizarre to speak of the eternity of the God who employed the man Jesus as His organ as, in any sense, a "real preëxistence" of Jesus Himself. But this is the way the Ritschlians employ language.

Coming nearer home to Haering, we may profitably observe how the question of our Lord's preëxistence is dealt with by his life-long theological friend, his fellow-Swabian, Max Reischle. Reischle feels able to speak of "an eternal Being of Jesus Christ" after a fashion wholly incomprehensible to us, and is able to connect this with the idea of the Logos, thought of, however, not as a distinct hypostasis in the Godhead but only as "an aspect, tendency, mode of operation of the Divine Being Itself". "If, however, we raise the question," he proceeds, "whether we are to carry into the eternal Being of the *θεὸς λόγος*, also the personal life of the historical and exalted Christ, distinct from that of the Father" (for it is only to the historical and exalted Christ that a distinct hypostasis is allowed, p. 62), "only so much as this can be said: Since the action of the Logos is intelligible to us only with respect to and in the person of Jesus Christ, we can never in our faith think away this personality from the conception of the Logos; but we must always think, as of the eternal God as Father of Jesus Christ, so also of the eternal Logos or of that eternal self-determination in God, as related to Jesus Christ. But what the nature of this relation is, we are, as finite beings, incapable of penetrating, and still more of making it the starting point in an explanation of the incarnation of Jesus," "Thus," he adds, "we are in the question of the eternal origin of Jesus Christ, ever again brought back to this—the believing recognition, not only *back of*, but

in His earthly personal life, and in the activities of the exalted one, of the eternal Divine Being determining the time-course" (*Christliche Glaubenslehre in Leitsätzen*.<sup>2</sup> 1902, pp. 199-120). There is a distinct refusal here to allow to Christ any personal preëxistence, and the reduction of His preëxistence to that of the impersonal Logos inseparably connected with Him in our thought, while the meagreness of this result is partially covered up by a suggestion that we are, as finite creatures, incapable of understanding such relationships, and a reference to the manifest presence of the eternal God with Jesus Christ. If our necessary thinking of God as Father of Jesus Christ, he intimates, does not carry with it the consequence that God was always the Father of Jesus Christ, neither does our necessary thinking of the Logos in connection with the person, Jesus, carry with it the consequence that the Logos was always connected with that person.

The impulse to suspect that Haering's doctrine of the preëxistence of Jesus may also evaporate under our gaze into some such mist as this, arises not only generally from its astonishing incongruity with the scheme of his teaching as a whole, but more particularly from the immense difficulty of taking it literally in the face of his decisive rejection of the doctrines of the Trinity on the one hand and of the Two Natures of our Lord on the other. With him God is a monadic Divine person and Jesus is a monadic human person, and on those postulates it seems impossible to construe to thought a real personally preëxistent Christ. He cannot be thought of as a personal distinction in the Godhead; for there are no personal distinctions in the Godhead. He equally cannot be thought of as some sort of a "middle-being": whatever else Jesus is to Haering, He is a genuine man, a human being with all the qualities of humanity. Will he then project Him back into eternity as some kind of a "heavenly man", despite His strong asseveration that He "belongs to us"? The monstrosity of these notions in the general context of Haering's thought bids us pause before we take his words at their face value. Is it not more probable that like his fellow Ritschlians here he has some subtle meaning in mind, which does not appear on the surface of his words, especially since he tells us that his advocacy of the preëxistence of Christ will commend itself in proportion as we accept the notion strictly as a "limitative-notion", that is to say as something quite incomprehensible to us? Meanwhile, it must be admitted that he seems to ascribe to Christ as a fact, whatever we are to say of the mode, a real personal preëxistence. "This *limitative-notion*," he says, "may be formulated" ("by those who accept it" seems to be added in the later text), "as follows: the love of God, effective to us in Christ as the Son, is so truly love of God, effective self-revelation of His nature, that it is eternally directed to Him, the vehicle of this eternal love, not only in the sense of ideal preëxistence,—to Him as the temporal-historical correlate of the eternal love of God,—but also apart from His earthly existence, as love of the Father for the Son, in the mystery of the eternal life of God, or then, accordingly, because no other word stands at our disposal, in real preëxistence; and—this

the other side of the same notion—this Son, eternally loved by God, is, as sent by the Father into the world, so come into the world by an act of love of His own" (p. 704). It certainly seems to be said here not only that God's love for the Son is eternal, but that the Son whom God loves is eternal; not only that the Son was sent into the world by God, but that He came into the world by an act of His own. All things considered it does not appear strange that Haering's confidence in such a "limitative notion" should not seem quite complete. He speaks of its "advocates", to be sure, as "convinced". But he agrees that they must not "make assent to it an essential element of saving faith itself"—that is to say of the necessary content of the Christian religion—"but", he adds in the later revision of his text, "shall rather leave open the possibility that, in the progress of knowledge with regard to the Christian salvation, it may be superseded" (p. 707).

We have been interested to observe how Haering's critics, sharing his general Ritschlian point of view, understand him on this matter. A. Titius (*Theologische Rundschau* x, 1907, p. 460) seems merely to record the fact that Haering holds such an opinion. "The doctrine of Christ's real preëxistence," he writes, "is accepted" by Haering, "with respect to its kernel indeed as a 'providentially supplied limitative-notion' (p. 449), but along with that also not as an 'essential element of saving faith itself.'" H. H. Wendt (*Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 1907, 23, col. 647) seems to drop a sly suggestion that Haering's recognition of a real preëxistence for Christ may possibly be classed in Haering's view along with that knowledge which passes away. "With circumspect reserve," he writes, "Haering permits the New Testament ideas of the real preëxistence of Christ to pass as limitative-notions, which the Christian community may retain, 'so as to lose nothing of the mystery of God's revelation of love in Christ, until in other conditions of existence a more perfect knowledge of it discloses itself' (p. 499)". E. Günther (*Die Entwicklung der Lehre von d. Person Christi im xix Jahrhundert*, 1911, pp. 330-1) deals with the matter at more length, but also, it seems, with a slight undertone of sarcasm. "Perhaps the most difficult point in Haering's Christology," he says, "is his doctrine of *preëxistence* as a 'limitative-notion'. If he advances beyond the so-called ideal preëxistence this is wholly from motives derived from religion and the New Testament. The ideas of the love of the Father who gives the Son and of the humble self-surrender of the Son who came into the world by an act of love of His own, are to him too valuable to be relinquished. The origin of the Pauline and Johannine Christology is also a problem for Haering, which however, is not capable of being solved—or perhaps is already solved—from analogies and connections derived from Comparative Religion (pp. 443-448). But he who will not abandon the notion of the real preëxistence should give it expression on the one side only as the ultimate culmination of the immediate conceptions of faith, and on the other with the conscious reservation that there can exist for us in this region no knowledge (p. 450). We may con-

jecture that in this reference many will rather be disposed to speak of the limits of thought than of 'limitative-thoughts' (*die Gedanken-grenze als Grenzgedanken*). They will, however, be gladly ready with Haering 'without curtailment of their particular gift, encouraged rather by a noble rivalry, weary of mere negations, to unite in a real affirmation' (p. 452)." Whatever they may think of the procedure, neither Titius, Wendt, nor Günther appears to doubt that Haering intends to teach a real personal preëxistence for Christ.

We shall not follow the details of Haering's system further. With his reduction of the person of Christ to the dimensions of a mere man (despite that "rock in the sky" of a problematical incomprehensible preëxistence), and of the work of Christ to merely impressing men with the conviction that God is "holy love" (despite the ineffective efforts to discover in this some value to God); with his reduction of God Himself to mere Love—whatever that may mean—(despite the incongruous insistence against his master, Ritschl, that "righteousness" and "wrath" have a place in the Divine nature): it is easy to understand what a "reduced Christianity" he sets forth. The fundamental difficulty lies of course in the lack of "external authority". It is not to be wondered at that one, who, having discarded the authority of the revelation of God embodied in the Scriptures, finds his task as a theologian only in "giving expression to the religious interpretation of the gospel which is attainable at the period" at which he writes—that is, who seeks his guidance not in a sure word of God but in shifting public opinion—should be able to set forth only a meagre and lowpitched system of doctrine. Or that he should sit rather loosely to what he does give us. Certainly there is observable in the teachings of such writers, and not least in Haering, a certain "elasticity" as it has been euphemistically phrased. He has his own faith-judgments; but so also have others: why should he demand exclusive recognition for his own? So, to take examples only from matters which have come before us, Haering will not "dogmatize" on the "mode" of the resurrection of Jesus; on the saving activity of the exalted Christ; on the employment of the term "divinity" with reference to Christ; on even his poverty-stricken notion of some sort of preëxistence for Christ. In his hands Christianity takes on the appearance of a highly elastic cord in rapid vibration; there may be a solid cord somewhere, but all that appears to sight is a vague and tenuous lozenge of unstable and unsubstantial material. Despite the parade of Apologetical substructure a sense of unreality gradually grows upon the reader as he proceeds through the volumes, and he closes them with the feeling that he has not been given a solid system of Christian doctrine; not even a "gospel"—a body of glad-tidings—which Haering would no doubt prefer that it should be; but only a collection of the more or less plausible religious opinions of a good man conscious of lacking any firm ground for his feet.

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