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Introduction to Sacred Theology

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Propheeten hinausgehoben wird und darum einzigartig dasteht. So sahen es die alten Juden an, Apost. 6, 11; Joh. 9, 28. 29; so Johannes, der doch aus Eingebung des Heiligen Geistes redet, Joh. 1, 17; so die Brüder zu Jerusalem, Apost. 21, 21; so Christus selber, Joh. 6, 32; 7, 19. 22. 23. Daran ändert nichts die Tatsache, daß er auch ein Propheet genannt wird, Hof. 12, 14, ebensowenig wie der Umstand, daß Christus ein Mensch genannt wird (z. B. 1 Tim. 2, 5 *ἀνθρώπος* sogar ohne Artikel!) irgend etwas an der Tatsache ändert, daß derselbe Christus andertwärts über alle Menschen hinausgehoben wird, Phil. 2, 9—11. Er ist eben beides, ein Mensch und der Mensch, wie es keinen zweiten gibt, der Gottmensch. So ist Moses beides, ein Propheet und der Propheet, wie es keinen andern wieder gab bis auf Jesum.

Alle Einwände vermögen das klare Gotteswort nicht umzustößen. Wir bleiben dabei, es ist dies eine klare, deutliche Weissagung auf den einigen Propheeten Jesus Christus. X h. L ä t s c h.

Introduction to Sacred Theology.¹⁾

(*Prolegomena.*)

The Nature and Constitution of Sacred Theology.

1. The Scriptural Viewpoint of the Christian Theologian.

Owing to the diverse views and tendencies prevailing among theologians to-day, it is necessary for the Christian theologian, before presenting to his readers his dogmatic treatise, to declare in clear and unmistakable terms from what viewpoint this has been written.

The viewpoint of the present-day modernistic theologian is that truth must be determined by human reason in the light of scientific research. The theological Liberalist therefore does not recognize Holy Scripture as the source and norm of faith, but holds that this ancient standard of the Christian Church has been superseded by the standards of reason and philosophy set up by himself. From this viewpoint his dogmatic treatise is written, and since this viewpoint is anti-Scriptural and unchristian, it follows that his whole theology is rationalistic, naturalistic, and diametrically opposed to the Word of God.

1) All who are acquainted with the three volumes of Dr. F. Pieper's *Christliche Dogmatik* will readily agree that this phenomenal work deserves a place in the library of every theologian in our country. Unfortunately it is written in a language which renders it inaccessible to the majority of American ministers. On account of the weighty importance of the Scriptural truths which Dr. Pieper so clearly sets forth in his Dogmatics the effort is here made to present in a condensed form the main thoughts of at least his inimitable *Prolegomena*. May these summaries induce many Christian teachers and ministers to study Dr. Pieper's *Christliche Dogmatik* in the original! — J. T. M.

The viewpoint of the Roman Catholic theologian is that truth must be determined by both Holy Scripture and the "infallible" traditions of the Church as these are formally set forth in the papal decretals and decisions.²⁾ This erroneous viewpoint proves the anti-christian character of papistical theology; for it, too, is in direct opposition to Holy Scripture.

The viewpoint of the modern rationalizing Protestant theologian is that, while Holy Scripture is indeed a "divine-human record of revealed truths," which contains the doctrines that Christians must believe for their salvation, these saving truths must be determined not by any authoritative statement of the Scriptures, but rather by the "Christian faith-consciousness" or the "regenerate and sanctified mind" or the "Christian experience" of the theologian (*das christliche Glaubensbewusstsein, das wiedergeborene Ich, das christliche Erlebnis*). In his opinion not the objective statement of Holy Scripture, but rather the "sanctified self-consciousness of the dogmatizing subject" (*das fromme Selbstbewusstsein des dogmatisierenden Subjekts*) is, in the last analysis, the norm which decides what is divine truth or not. Modern rationalistic theology is therefore a movement away from Holy Scripture (*eine Los-von-der-Schrift-Bewegung*) to a source and norm of faith established by man himself. This movement may differ in degree, but is always the same in kind. It is basically anti-Scriptural and has its source in the unbelief of the carnal heart. The viewpoint of the modern rationalistic theologian must therefore likewise be rejected as unchristian and opposed to Holy Scripture.

The viewpoint from which the present dogmatic treatise is written is that Holy Scripture is the only source and norm of the Christian faith and life, and this for the simple reason that the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God, absolutely infallible and inerrant, both in whole and in part, so that on whatever point of doctrine or life it has spoken, the matter is fully decided. (*Scriptura locuta, res decisa est.*) This viewpoint identifies Holy Scripture with the Word of God; it does not merely affirm that the Bible contains, but rather that it is, fully and absolutely, in all its parts, the Word of God.

That this viewpoint is the only correct one is proved both by Christ and His inspired apostles. Our divine Savior accepted no other norm than Holy Scripture, and He invariably rejected the traditions of the Pharisees and the "reasonings" of the Sadducees. When declaring His divine doctrines and refuting error, He constantly based His teachings on the immovable foundation of the

2) Thus he accepts as a source and norm of faith, in addition to Holy Scripture (to which he falsely adds the Apocrypha), something that is foreign and even opposed to Holy Scripture and ascribes to it the same authority as to the Word of God.

written Word of God. Thus at the beginning of His ministry He met the temptations of Satan with the emphatic assertion: "It is written," Matt. 4, 4 ff., and to this principle He adhered throughout His ministry. Cf. John 5, 39; Matt. 5, 17—19; John 8, 31, 32, etc. Also the apostles regarded Holy Scripture, including their own inspired teachings, oral or written, as the sole source and norm of faith. Cf. Gal. 1, 8; 2 Tim. 3, 15—17; Titus 1, 9; 1 Cor. 14, 37; 2 Pet. 1, 19, etc. When in the days of the Reformation the Bible was restored to its rightful place as the sole authority of the Christian faith, Luther once more proclaimed it as "the fountain of all wisdom." (St. Louis Ed., I, 1289 ff.) The great Reformer said: "You must believe that God Himself speaks in the Bible, and your attitude to it must be accordingly." (III, 21.) Those who, like the scholastic theologians, deviated from the Word of God and based their views and doctrines on grounds of reason or philosophy Luther styled "monsters" (*portenta*). The claim made by modern rationalistic theologians that Luther's attitude to the authority of Holy Scripture was rather "a free one" (*eine freiere Stellung*) is disproved by his own clear and emphatic statements to the contrary. And like Luther, so all true Christian theologians have at all times maintained that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and therefore the only source and norm of Christian faith; and this truth they upheld against all gainsayers.

Modern rationalistic theologians aver that they cannot identify Holy Scripture with the Word of God and therefore accept it as the sole norm because their sense of actuality (*Wirklichkeitssinn*) does not permit them to do so, but rather demands another norm outside and beyond Holy Scripture, such as their "Christian consciousness," their "Christian experience," etc. In reality, however, this claim only proves how seriously they are deceiving themselves; for the knowledge of the truth can be gained only from the Word of God, and upon it alone can the Christian faith be based. Our divine Lord states emphatically that we shall know the truth only if we continue in His Word, as proclaimed either by Himself or by His inspired prophets and apostles, John 8, 31, 32; 17, 20; Eph. 2, 20. The truth of this statement is evidenced by the fact that all theologians who rejected Holy Scripture as the sole norm of faith have invariably denied the specific Christian doctrines, such as the vicarious atonement of Christ, justification by grace through faith, etc. (Cf. Dr. F. Pieper, *Christliche Dogmatik*, Vol. 1, 4 ff.) Thus Hofmann, the father of the modern subjective theology (*Ichtheologie*), denied Christ's vicarious satisfaction and taught the pagan theology of salvation without the redemptive work of Christ. It is, moreover, proved by the confusion of doctrine which resulted whenever the principle that Holy Scripture is the sole authority in religion was either ignored or given up. This confusion in doctrine (*Lehrverwirrung*) prevails

whenever norms different from Holy Scripture are accepted as the basis of Christian doctrine; for subjective theology can never supply the Christian Church with a true and certain substratum of faith. Without Holy Scripture as the sole source and standard of faith the Church is wholly without a foundation on which to rest its faith; it finds itself in a maelstrom of conflicting subjective views, all of which are fatal to the Christian faith.

2. Of Religion in General.

The etymology of the term *religion* is still a matter of controversy. The Lutheran dogmatician Hollaz writes (32): "Some suppose the term *religion* to be derived from *religando* (Lactantius), others from *relegendo* (Cicero). According to the former derivation, religion signifies the obligation rightly to worship God or something which imposes upon man obligations and duties. According to the latter etymology, religion is diligent attention to those things which pertain to the worship of God. The former derivation is more generally received." (*Doctr. Theol.*, p. 21.³) The Lutheran dogmatician Quenstedt mentions as synonyms of religion the Greek terms *θρησκεία*, Jas. 1, 26; *εὐσέβεια*, 1 Tim. 4, 8; *λογικὴ λατρεία*, Rom. 12, 1. However, none of these terms is really synonymous with religion, though each designates and emphasizes a peculiar phase of it. True religion is true communion with the true God through faith in Jesus Christ; nothing more and nothing less. Nevertheless, the controversy concerning the etymological meaning of religion need not trouble us since in the final analysis the connotation of a word does not depend on its etymological derivation, but rather on its usage (*usus loquendi*).

But neither from the common usage of the term *religion* can we derive a satisfactory definition of religion by which both the Christian religion and the non-Christian religions may be grouped inclusively into one class. While both Christians and non-Christians employ the term *religion*, each of these groups connects with it its own specific concepts and meanings, and these are, as we shall see, contradictory. The matter deserves careful attention.

Investigation shows that all heathen religions stand in direct opposition to the Christian religion. They are all, without exception, religions of the Law. To the heathen, religion means the earnest endeavor of men to reconcile the deities by their own efforts or works, such as worship, sacrifices, moral conduct, asceticism, etc. In this respect all non-Christian religions agree, no matter how much they may differ in accidental details. Nor can we expect anything else; for the heathen by nature do not know the Gospel [1 Cor. 2, 6—10:

3) *The Doctrinal Theology of the Ev. Luth. Church.* By H. Schmid; tr. by Jacobs and Hay.

"We speak . . . the hidden wisdom, . . . which none of the princes of this world knew"], but only the divine Law, namely, in so far as this is written in their hearts, Rom. 2, 15: "Which show the work of the Law written in their hearts." Hence all their religious thoughts move within the sphere of the Law, so that from beginning to end their religions are, and needs must be, "religions of the Law." Christians, on the contrary, believe true religion to consist in the very opposite. To them religion means true faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, or in the gracious message, revealed in Holy Scripture, that a perfect reconciliation has been effected between God and man through the vicarious atonement (*satisfactio vicaria*) of the divine-human Christ, the Redeemer of the world. Hence religion in the true sense of the term may be ascribed only to believers in Christ Jesus. And that is precisely what Holy Scripture teaches on this score. Religion, in the sense of God's Word, is communion with the true God through faith in Jesus Christ. Thus St. Paul testifies: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the Law," Gal. 2, 16. If within external Christendom, theologians or entire denominations deny the cardinal doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Christ, either in whole or in part, these persons or groups of persons have surrendered the Christian conception of religion and have adopted the pagan view. They are apostates from the Christian faith, as St. Paul declares: "Christ is become of no effect unto you whosoever of you are justified by the Law; ye are fallen from grace," Gal. 5, 4. In short, the doctrine of salvation by faith and that of salvation by works are opposites (*opposita*), which needs must exclude each other, so that, if any one trusts in his works for salvation, he no longer in deed and truth professes the Christian religion.

The basic difference between the Christian religion and all other so-called religions has been well pointed out by Professor F. Max Mueller of Oxford University, who writes: "In the discharge of my duties for forty years as professor of Sanskrit in the University of Oxford I have devoted as much time as any man living to the study of the sacred books of the East, and I have found the one key-note, the one diapason, so to speak, of all these so-called sacred books, . . . the one refrain through all — salvation by works. They all say that salvation must be purchased, must be bought with a price, and that the sole price, the sole purchase-money, must be our works and deservings. Our own Holy Bible, our sacred Book of the East, is from beginning to end a protest against this doctrine. Good works are indeed enjoined upon us in that sacred Book of the East; but they are only the outcome of a grateful heart; they are only a thank-offering, the fruits of our faith. They are never the ransom-money

of the true disciples of Christ. Let us not shut our eyes to what is excellent and true and of good report in these sacred books, but let us teach Hindus, Buddhists, and Mohammedans that there is only one sacred Book of the East that can be their mainstay in that awful hour when they pass all alone into the unseen world. It is the sacred Book which contains that faithful saying, worthy to be received by all men, women, and children, and not merely of our Christians, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (Cf. Dr. Pieper, *Christliche Dogmatik*, I, 15 ff.)

3. Of the Number of Religions in the World.

The number of religions in the world has been variously estimated. Commonly we speak of four different religions: the pagan, the Jewish, the Mohammedan, and the Christian. Others, again, have counted as many as thousand different religions. While in common parlance such enumerations may be employed, it must never be forgotten that in the final analysis all religions resolve themselves into two: religions of the Law, that is, religions that endeavor to reconcile the deity by works of the Law, and the religion of the Gospel, that is, the belief, divinely wrought and engendered by the Holy Ghost through the means of grace, that God has been reconciled to the sinner, without any works on his part, through the vicarious redemption of Christ Jesus, and that consequently salvation is God's free gift, appropriated by the sinner through faith in Christ Jesus.

This division of religions into two distinct and opposing groups is truly Scriptural. Holy Scripture acknowledges as true religion only that which teaches that the sinner is saved through faith in Christ. It distinctly declares it to be the mission of the Christian Church to displace all man-made religions and to establish throughout the whole world the religion of the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our divine Lord's Great Commission reads: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned," Mark 16, 15. 16. To St. Paul the glorified Savior said: I am sending thee to the Gentiles "to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me," Acts 26, 17. 18. According to this express statement of Holy Writ all who do not believe the Gospel are kept in darkness and in the power of Satan, from which they are delivered only through sanctification by faith. Thus the Word of God recognizes only the Christian religion as true and as bringing salvation to men; it alone deserves the name of religion since it alone reunites sinful man with God. If man-made forms of worship are called religions, this term is applied to them in an improper sense, just

as idols are denominated "gods" though in reality they are not gods. This being the case, it is impossible to find a general religious concept or definition by which all religions existing in the world, both the true and the false, may be grouped in a single class. Christianity, by its very origin, does not belong in the group of religions which are man-made.

All who deny this and claim that such a general religious concept or definition can be found, overlook the essential difference between the religion of Christ and those of human origin. Thus religion has been defined as "the personal relation of man to God." This definition, it has been affirmed, is broad enough to include both the Christian and the pagan religions. However, its inadequacy becomes apparent as we begin to analyze "man's relation to God." Since all men are sinners, their relation to God by nature is that of fear and despair and hence of hatred against God. This miserable relation is attested both by Scripture and experience. According to the clear teaching of God's Word all men who are not born again through faith in Christ are "without Christ," "have no hope," and are "without God in the world," Eph. 2, 12. In spite of their earnest endeavors to reconcile God by their works, their fear and hopelessness continue; for they remain under the curse and condemnation of the divine Law. This fact St. Paul asserts when he writes: "As many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse," Gal. 3, 10. The same apostle says also that "the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to devils and not to God," 1 Cor. 10, 20. In short, as long as a person is without faith in Christ, his "personal relation to God" is a relation of dread, despair, and hopelessness and therefore also of enmity against God, Rom. 8, 7. However, the personal relation to God changes as soon as a person becomes a child of God through faith in Christ; then he obtains "a good conscience," the assurance of divine grace, the conviction that his sins are forgiven, and the inestimable hope of eternal life. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new," 2 Cor. 5, 17. This blessed relation St. Paul describes most beautifully in Rom. 5, 1, 2, where he writes: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into the grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." And again, v. 11: "We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." The believer's personal relation to God is therefore the very opposite of "the personal relation to God" which is found in the unbeliever; it is a relation of peace, joy, and happiness.

Again, religion has been defined as "the method of worshipping God." This definition is quite adequate as far as the Christian religion is concerned, but as a definition of religion in general it is

woefully inadequate, since all non-Christian religions are certainly not "methods of worshiping God." True worship of God is possible only through faith in Christ, as our Lord emphatically tells us when He declares: "All men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father, which hath sent Him," John 5, 23. Every "worship of God" without Christ dishonors God and is therefore not worship of God, but blasphemy and opposition to God. Indeed, it is devil-worship, as St. Paul declares when he writes: "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to devils and not to God," 1 Cor. 10, 20. In these words the apostle affirms emphatically that the heathen cannot worship the true God. Though they be ever so earnest in their endeavor to placate their deities, their worship is a service of devils. The reason for this is clear. All non-Christian religions err with regard to the object as well as the method of worship. The heathen worship objects that are not divine and thus give the glory belonging to God to another and His praise to graven images, Is. 42, 8. Such blasphemous worship is an abomination in the sight of God and therefore the very opposite of true worship. But the non-Christian religions err also with regard to the method of worship. Since the heathen are ignorant of the divine Savior of men and so do not know that they must trust in Him for salvation, they seek to quiet their consciences whenever these are aroused to a consciousness of sin and guilt and to reconcile the objects of their worship by good works. But reliance on works for justification offends God and provokes Him to anger. "As many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse," Gal. 3, 10. That is God's verdict, His own condemnation of a worship offered to Him on the grounds of human merits. In short, religion in general cannot be defined as "the method of worshiping God"; for that definition pertains only to the Christian religion and not to any other. This fact has been strongly affirmed by our Lutheran dogmatists. Hollaz writes (33): "Religion, improperly speaking, signifies the false; properly speaking, the true method of worshiping God." (*Doctr. Theol.*, p. 22.) This distinction is as vital as it is correct.

Quite recently religion has been defined as the "endeavor of man to secure, supplement, and perfect personal and social life with the aid of a higher, supernatural power." This endeavor, the German theologian Kirn asserts, is common to all religions, so that it supplies us indeed with a general concept to define religion. However, this definition applies only to the religions of the Law, or to the non-Christian religions, which certainly endeavor to secure personal life through human efforts and works. It is the common denominator of every religion outside that of Christ; for the erroneous opinion that a man must save himself by good deeds (*opinio legis*) inheres by nature in all men. The Christian religion, however, differs radically

from this false notion. In fact, from beginning to end it is a protest against the false doctrine that a man must secure life by his own efforts. It absolutely rejects the doctrine of work-righteousness and affirms as its first and basic principle that a sinner is justified by grace alone, without the deeds of the Law. It is largely because of this antagonism of the Christian religion to those which teach salvation by works that the Gospel of Christ is a stumbling-block to the Jew and foolishness to the Greek, 1 Cor. 1, 23; 2, 14. Man, blinded by sin, does not desire a way to salvation that is purely by grace, through faith in a divine Savior.

From the above it is clear that Christianity, because it is the only true religion, does not allow itself to be grouped together with man-made religions. There is no general religious concept or definition which covers both what Christianity is and what man-made religions stand for, because Christianity belongs in a class by itself. It alone is the true religion, while all man-made religions are false and counterfeit; and as little as counterfeit coin is money, so little can man-made religions substantiate their claim of being religions. If the term *religion* is applied to them, it is done altogether in an improper sense and according to the principle by which we apply to counterfeit coins the term *money* or by which Holy Scripture applies to the pagan idols the term *gods* (*elohim*). The applying of the name in this case never means that the thing so named is in deed and truth what the name expresses. The heathen idols are not gods, nor are the heathen forms of worship religions in the true sense of the term. Accordingly Quenstedt writes (I, 28): "The term *religion* is used either improperly and falsely (*abusive*) or properly. Improperly and falsely it is used for false religion, namely, for the heathen, the Mohammedan, and the Jewish religion, in which sense Calixtus in the *Theological Apparatus* treats of the divers religions of the world, in spite of the fact that there is only one true religion, namely, the Christian." In keeping with this doctrine our Lutheran dogmaticians never sought a general religious concept or definition to accommodate both the Christian and the non-Christian religions, but grouped the Christian religion in a class by itself as the only religion and all others as false and unworthy of the name. This classification alone is Scriptural.

But here the objection has been raised that the orthodox dogmaticians were destitute of an adequate psychological, philosophical, and historical discernment of the various non-Christian religions, so that their lack of appreciating these can well be understood. This want, it is claimed, has been supplied by modern research work in psychology of religion, philosophy of religion, and comparative religion (*Religionsgeschichte*). Yet, as we shall see, even the results of these studies do not disprove the correctness of the old dual division of religion into the true and the false.

Modern religious psychology endeavors to point out "the similarity of the psychological phenomena" (*die Gleichartigkeit der psychologischen Erscheinungen*) found in both the Christian religion and the non-Christian religions. This similarity, it is said, was overlooked by the older divines, and their inability to find a general religious concept or definition to cover both the Christian and the non-Christian religions is attributable to this fact. But we may reply to this charge that, after all, the psychological phenomena of the Christian religion and of the non-Christian religions are not so very similar; in fact, essentially they are diametrically opposed to each other. In the heart of the non-Christian we invariably find such "psychological phenomena" as the consciousness of guilt, an accusing and condemning conscience, fear of punishment, inward flight from, and hatred of, God, and all these coupled with the constant desire to placate God by good works; since, however, good works cannot reconcile God, we find, in addition, the "psychological phenomena" of terror of death, hopelessness, and despair. These "psychological phenomena" are clearly attested by Holy Scripture, Eph. 2, 12: "Having no hope"; Heb. 2, 15: "Who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." The ingenuous confessions of honest and earnest heathen thinkers emphatically confirm what Holy Scripture teaches on this score; for they all reecho the tragic note of spiritual despair as they contemplate human sin and guilt. However, in the soul of the believing child of God we find the very opposite "psychological phenomena," such as the consciousness of guilt removed and of sin forgiven, peace with God (Rom. 5, 1—3), filial love toward God and access to His grace, exceeding joy even in death, and the firm hope of eternal life. And all these "psychological phenomena" are coupled with the sanctified desire to serve God in deed and in truth, out of heartfelt gratitude for His unmerited gift of grace. Gal. 2, 20: "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." St. Paul very convincingly affirms the diversity of the "psychological [?] phenomena" which he experienced before his conversion and after. He writes 1 Cor. 15, 9, 10: "I persecuted the Church of God; but by the grace of God I am what I am." Also, in order to assure his readers of the blessedness of their Christian profession, he constantly directs their attention to the diversity of the "psychological experiences" which they had, first as poor blind heathen and afterwards as enlightened Christians. Eph. 2, 5: "Even when we were dead in sins, hath [He] quickened us together with Christ." Cf. Eph. 2, 11—22; 1 Cor. 12, 2, 27, etc. The similarity of the "psychological phenomena" which modern students of religious psychology assert so strongly is only a *formal*, not a *material*, similarity. Thus Christians worship and heathen worship; yet how radically different is their worship in

all its essentials! Christians pray and heathen pray; yet what a vast difference there is between the Christian and the pagan prayer! Thus also religious psychology cannot deny the essential difference between the Christian religion and the non-Christian religions and must therefore admit that the dual division of religions into the true and the false is correct.

The same is true of the historical study of religion. Comparative religion (*Religionsgeschichte*) demonstrates the fact that all religions outside the Christian religion are "religions of the Law," or "religions of works," maintaining as their basic principle the universal tenet that man must earn his salvation by worthy deeds. The "glad news" of salvation by grace through faith, on the other hand, is found in the Bible only, not in any other so-called book of religion. So also the historical study of religion can establish no other division of religions than that of the Lutheran dogmaticians, who put into the first group the Christian religion as the one teaching salvation by grace and into the second all man-made religions, teaching salvation by works. "Work religions" may differ in non-essential details, which depend on climatic, psychological, and racial factors, but they all agree in the common fundamental principle of work-righteousness.

Lastly also the philosophical study of religion, or philosophy of religion, cannot lead us beyond the dual division of religions into two distinct kinds, the one true and the other false. The student of religious philosophy can, of course, operate only with the natural knowledge of God, or the divine Law written in the heart of man. But when he does define religion on purely natural premises, that is to say, when he views religion wholly apart from divine revelation, his conclusion must needs be that religion is essentially man's effort to reconcile God on the grounds of right conduct. Thus Socrates, the greatest of Greek philosophers, though he surpassed all Greek philosophers by the grandeur and sublimity of his philosophico-religious ideas, nevertheless demanded that in the hour of his death a cock should be sacrificed to Aesculapius. Socrates conceived the need of a savior, far greater than any human savior might be; yet since the Savior of the Bible was unknown to him, he was obliged to trust in his works for righteousness. So also Immanuel Kant, who is commonly regarded as the foremost religious philosopher and is still the greatest of all modern philosophers, affirmed that from the viewpoint of pure philosophy the essence of religion must be regarded as "morality" and that the Christian doctrine of the atonement can have no place in any speculative system of religion. Religious philosophy must therefore always conceive of religion as the human effort to win salvation by works. Thus the dual division of religion which Christian divines made long ago must be retained even to-day.

There is, however, a system of religious philosophy which pur-

poses to build up its rationalistic speculations on the basis of Holy Scripture. The advocates of this type of religious philosophy admit that the revealed truths of Holy Scripture lie beyond the intellectual comprehension of man. For this reason these must be believed, that is, accepted as true *a priori*. Yet with this simple act of believing the theologian should not rest satisfied. Through faith in the divine truths of revelation he must progress to their intellectual apprehension. What the ordinary believer knows by faith the theologian must understand. So Anselm of Canterbury, the father of medieval scholasticism, declared: "*Credo, ut intelligam.*" Anselm's purpose, in a way, was laudable. He sought to meet and refute the skeptics of his time who *a priori* rejected the revealed truths as false because they are unintelligible to human reason. Anselm demanded that the revealed truths should first be believed in order that they might be dialectically demonstrated and rationally understood. His underlying principle was that "a Christian through faith must progress to understanding and not through understanding to faith." ("*Christianus per fidem debet ad intellectum proficere, non per intellectum ad fidem accedere.*") The disciples of Anselm are the modern advocates of "scientific theology," falsely so called, who, like their medieval teacher, assert that faith must be elevated to knowledge, because only in this way the Christian religion can be perceived and demonstrated as the absolute truth. But this endeavor to harmonize faith with reason is unscriptural. Jesus assures us that we shall know the truth only if, and as long as, we continue through faith in His Word, John 8, 31. 32. In the same spirit, St. Paul asserts that all teachers of the Church who do not adhere to the truth of Christ Jesus by simple faith are "proud, knowing nothing, but doting," 1 Tim. 6, 3. 4. Thus both Christ and Paul are opposed to the endeavor of "scientific theologians" to elevate faith to knowledge and the revealed truth to a human science. The reason for this is evident. The Christian religion cannot be brought down to the level of man's intellectual comprehension without losing its supernatural character and content. History shows very plainly how fatal the endeavor to elevate faith to knowledge has proved itself. Anselm denied the active obedience of Christ, Abaelard denied His vicarious atonement, and in recent times the adherents of "scientific theology" have denied both the divine inspiration of Holy Scripture and the justification of a sinner by grace, through faith in Christ. Thus both the formal and the material principle of Christianity has been denied, and the whole Christian religion has been eviscerated of its divinely revealed content. The ultimate consequence of the application of philosophy to theology is Modernism or agnosticism.

Incidentally, also this last consideration proves the correctness of the dual division of religions into the true and the false; for the con-

tent of the Christian religion is of such a nature that it is either completely received by faith or completely rejected since the mysteries of revealed truth are not recognized as such by human reason. The perverted reason of man acknowledges as true only the religions of the Law, or of works, while with all its might it contends against the religion of faith. On the other hand, Holy Scripture condemns as false all religions of works, just as it condemns unregenerate human reason as blind, dead, and absolutely unable to perceive the things of the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. 2, 14.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER.

(To be continued.)

The Sermon Methods.

(Concluded.)

When the theme is the chief thought *expressed* in the text and the parts are *deductions* from the text, then we have an *analytic-synthetic* outline. When the theme is a thought *derived* by way of deduction from the chief thought of the text and the parts are those *expressed* in the text, then we have a *synthetic-analytic* outline.

James M. Hoppin, who was a pupil of August Neander and professor in Yale College, wrote a book on homiletics in 1869, revising it in 1881. Speaking of the *form* of the sermon, he says: "We come now, under this general subject of the classification of sermons according to their treatment and form, to say a few words upon the actual *form* of the sermon. While the classification of sermons in this respect has been with all homiletical writers a fruitful one, we have already suggested that the simplest method of classification would be, first, into the textual; secondly, the topical, sometimes called 'subject sermons'; thirdly, the textual-topical. A more elaborate classification which was proposed would regard the form of the sermon as depending upon the manner of treating the text, the manner of treating the subject, and the general rhetorical treatment and would bring into view the various kinds of textual, topical, expository, doctrinal, ethical, historical, argumentative, meditative, and hortatory sermons. But we will not enter into this wide field or repeat what has been said on these points and will notice only for a moment *the two grand divisions of the textual and the topical forms of sermon.*

"If we were asked what style of sermonizing should be mainly recommended, not by any means as the exclusive one, but as the most ordinary method of preaching, year in and year out, for a pastor's regular work of instruction from the pulpit, we should answer that, without making it a dry excoitation of the Scriptures and without