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## Schleiermacher, His Theology and Influence.

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## Schleiermacher, His Theology and Influence

### 1

The Editorial Committee of this periodical has planned a series of articles on leading theologians of modern times who in a pre-eminent way have influenced and molded theological thought. These essays are to supply the necessary background of the theology current in our time, are to be practical rather than scientific, and are to present the various theological systems in such a way that even the reader unacquainted with technical literature will gain a clear picture of their traits and significance. This objective imposes a limitation on the essayists compelling them to remain within a narrow scope; but this limitation will redound to the good of the readers, since the conciseness and concreteness of the presentations will (as it is hoped) encourage them actually to read and thus profit by the series. In no case, perhaps, is the writer's self-limitation more required than in that of Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, the subject of the first essay, who unquestionably is the "father" of modern theology.

### 2

Schleiermacher was a theological eclectic, and only as such can he be rightly understood. In his theological thinking so many streams of heterogeneous thought converged that it is impossible for anyone to claim definitely that he was just this or that. His theology represents *multa in multis*.<sup>1)</sup> Living at a time when crass rationalism was still in vogue, he determined to end rationalism's arid intellectualism; yet he himself remained a rationalist in the fullest sense of the word, inasmuch as his whole theology was

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1) Cf. Dr. Carl Stange's illuminating article "Die geschichtliche Bedeutung Schleiermachers" in *Zeitschrift fuer systematische Theologie*, Jahrgang 1933/34, pp. 691 ff.



determined, not by Scripture but by his own subjective thinking, which in the last analysis is man's conceived reason. He never quite cast off his Reformed heritage, and yet he sharply repudiated orthodox Calvinistic doctrine. A romanticist, influenced by Friedrich Schlegel, trying to instill new life and vigor into the decadent ethical categories of his day, he refused, nevertheless, to follow the call of theological romanticism and opposed to it his own speculative system of independent realistic thought. Renouncing Kant, he still absorbed into his speculations important Kantian fundamentals. A pantheist in his religio-philosophical speculations, deeply affected by Spinoza, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and others, he, nevertheless, in his pastoral practice so emphasized traditional dualism that the charge of pantheism raised against him has been declared unfair. An idealist, delighting in Platonist philosophy, he none the less proved himself an ethical realist. A philosopher of no mean rating, he insisted, nevertheless, that religion and philosophy must be kept independent of each other. A mystic, he yet remained an activist, with a keen practical understanding of the needs of the Church of his day. An ardent patriot, he still fought the authorities to whom he was supposed to be in subjection. A strict moralist, he engaged, nevertheless, in a dubious love affair with a married woman and demanded that she divorce her husband. Forever retaining his inherited Moravian penchant for personal piety, he, nevertheless, defended the immoral novel *Lucinde* of his romanticist friend Schlegel. Schleiermacher thus represents a theological paradox, complex and yet again extremely simple in his basic theological premises. All Biblical theologians are agreed that he was the great non-Christian of his time, posing in his day and ours as the great Christian<sup>2)</sup> who did much to revive and revitalize Christianity. But the Christianity for which he stood was not the Christianity of the Holy Scriptures and of the Ecumenical Confessions. It was the non-Christianity of Modernism.<sup>3)</sup>

## 3

Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher was born in Breslau on November 21, 1768. His father, a member of the Reformed Church, served for many years as an army chaplain. His grandfather,<sup>4)</sup> also a Reformed minister, had for many years championed the enthusiastic, chiliastic, sexually perverse speculations of the

2) He has been called the "Reformer of the 19th century." F. Pieper, *Christliche Dogmatik*, I, 128, 145.

3) Doctrines, according to Schleiermacher, are secondary, they being no more than the "accounts of the religious affections set forth in speech." Cf. Knudson, *The Doctrine of God*, p. 50.

4) D. Schenkel, *Friedrich Schleiermacher*, "In the veins of his ancestors flowed religious blood that was easily made to boil up."



religious neurotic Elias Eller until his fraud was exposed. If H. R. Mackintosh<sup>5)</sup> claims that there is in Schleiermacher's make-up "little material for the psychologist," he overlooks the fact that Schleiermacher's heredity perhaps has fully as much to do with his theological development as his environment. He was a child of his time, but also the heir of family traits that had much to do in shaping his life and thought. He received his early education at Breslau and Pless, but obtained no decisive influences from his training until he attended the schools of the pietistic Moravians, first at Niesky and later at Barby. Finding himself in conflict with the theological views of the Moravians,<sup>6)</sup> he, in 1787, attended the University of Halle, where for two years he studied the philosophies of Plato, Aristotle, Kant, and the Leibniz-Wolffian school, being especially influenced by Plato. Leaving Halle in 1789, he stayed for a while with an uncle of his at Drossen, near Frankfort on the Oder and in 1790 passed the church examination in theology. Between 1790 and 1793 he held a position as tutor in the household of Count Dohna, a cultured, pious family, where (as he later declared) he learned the nature of humanity and freedom, which were vital factors in the development of his ideas on morality and religion. In 1793 he became a member of the Gedike Seminary at Berlin, and in 1794 he received a church appointment in Landsberg, where he was ordained and did ministerial work, preaching regularly and translating the sermons of Professor Hugh Blair of Edinburgh and of the English minister John Fawcett. Having studied Jacobi's *Letters on the Doctrine of Spinoza*, he was moved to write some essays of his own on Spinoza. Constantly studying and writing, Schleiermacher soon became known in wider circles, and in 1795 he was appointed Reformed pastor at the Charité at Berlin, which he served till 1802. Here he continued to write on philosophy and religion, publishing in 1797 his *Reden ueber Religion* (Addresses on Religion) and in 1800 his *Monologe* (Soliloquies), joined the romantic circle led by the Schlegels, associated himself with Henrietta Herz, a Jewess (a relation making him the object of much gossip), defended Schlegel's indecent *Lucinde*, and became entangled in a compromising love affair with Eleonore Grunow, the wife of a Berlin pastor, who, however, in the end, despite his pleas remained loyal to her husband. These experiences led to his "exile" at Stolpe in Pomerania, where he spent two unhappy years, working hard to

5) *Types of Modern Theology*, pp. 31 and 32.

6) His letters to his father show that at first he was in agreement with the pietistic trends of the *Unitas fratrum*. D. Schenkel, *Friedrich Schleiermacher*, p. 15 ff. — Lic. Hans Scheele: "Here perhaps Schleiermacher was influenced by his Moravian youth impressions; here are influences of a Christian profession, which greatly rejoiced in the Savior and was sure of Him, and which lived in his new life and of his new life." *Die Theorie von Christus als dem zweiten Adam bei Schleiermacher*, p. 58.



forget his Berlin associations. He studied Schelling, prepared a translation and commentary of Plato's works, and composed a general historical and critical study in ethics (*Outlines of a Critique of Previous Theories of Ethics*). In 1804 Schleiermacher joined the faculty of the University at Halle, where he lectured and wrote indefatigably on various theological subjects and in 1806 was elected University pastor. However, when in the winter of 1806 to 1807 Halle was taken and plundered by the French and Schleiermacher himself was relieved of his private possessions, he, in 1807, withdrew to Berlin, where he continued his lectures and library work. In 1808 he married a young widow, Henriette von Willich, nee Muehlenfels, the former wife of a Berlin pastor. This marriage supplied him with the required emotional stability. In 1809 he was appointed Reformed pastor of Trinity Church, and when in 1810 the University of Berlin was established, Schleiermacher was appointed professor on the theological faculty, De Wette and Marheinecke being his associates. The Halle experience had converted Schleiermacher into an ardent patriot, and from 1808 to 1810 he dedicated much of his time and influence to the cause of German freedom. He also worked tirelessly for the union of the Reformed and the Lutheran churches in Germany and for the freedom of the Church from the authority of the State in matters concerning itself.<sup>7)</sup> Though constantly at variance with civil authorities, he remained eminently popular with his students and church members, and his almost phenomenal capacity for lecturing, writing, preaching, pastoral and social pursuits, political activities, and the like continued unabated until his death on Feb. 12, 1834. Never in rugged health, slightly deformed, by nature highly emotional, he made himself, nevertheless, so useful to the world of his day that his funeral has been described in the following laudatory words: "On the 15th of February, 1834, a funeral procession was seen moving through the streets of Berlin the like of which that capital had rarely before witnessed. The coffin, covered with a black pall and simply decorated with a large copy of the Bible, was borne on the shoulders of twelve students of the University, thirty-six of the most robust of whom had volunteered to perform, alternately, this pious service. After these came a train of mourners on foot, extending upwards of a mile in length, and these were followed by one hundred mourning coaches, headed by the equipage of the King and the Crown Prince. Along the whole line traversed by the procession dense crowds of sympathizing spectators had gathered, while in the cemetery, beyond the gates of the city, similar crowds were assembled; and on every countenance might be read the fact that the individual borne to

7) Cf. Brandt, *Philosophy of Schleiermacher*, p. 11.



the grave was one of those representative men in whom are concentrated, as it were, in a focus the moral and intellectual life of the nation and the period to which they belong and who become, in consequence, centers of new light and diffusers of new and vivifying warmth. Such was indeed the case; for it was Friedrich Ernst Schleiermacher, whom by a spontaneous movement the capital of Protestant Germany was thus honoring in death." <sup>8)</sup> In a subsequent paragraph the biographer says: "During a quarter century Schleiermacher had exercised in that city the double function of a teacher at the University and in the Church; and approving himself a fearless citizen in times of imminent peril and an inspired preacher during a period of great religious indifference, he at a most critical juncture in the history of Prussia contributed more than any other individual to keep alive in all classes the pride of nationality and the love of independence, and to awaken religious earnestness and quickening moral sentiments. Ever ready to sacrifice himself in the interest not only of his country, but of the whole German nation, then bending under the yoke of France, his example had acted contagiously in Berlin more especially, where his influence was supreme, and had sustained in the people that determination to liberate themselves when an opportunity offered, which was ultimately so nobly carried out. 'His fresh, mighty, ever-cheerful spirit,' says a contemporary, 'had the effect of a courageous army during the period of greatest depression; and the energies which he set in motion were not isolated and superficial, but were the deepest and noblest in the human breast.' Children crowded to his religious lessons, men and women of the highest culture hung upon his lips when he addressed them from the pulpit and in private life clung to him with reverent affection, while the hundreds of students who flocked in yearly from all parts of Germany to attend his philosophical and theological lectures, carried away by the extraordinary influence of his individuality, assumed the character of disciples rather than of pupils. In this way, as well as through his writings, his influence had spread throughout the whole of Protestant Germany and attained a height rarely, if ever, equaled in modern times; while over the theologians of the rest of the Protestant world also the opinions of this highly gifted man exercised no inconsiderable sway." <sup>9)</sup>

## 4

Of the many works of Schleiermacher his *Ueber die Religion: Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Veraechtern* (Concerning Religion: Addresses to the Educated Among Its Despisers) and his popular *Der Christliche Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der evan-*

<sup>8)</sup> *The Life of Schleiermacher as Unfolded in His Autobiography and Letters.* Translated from the German by Frederica Rowan, pp. IX ff.

<sup>9)</sup> *Ibid.*



*gelischen Kirche im Zusammenhang dargestellt* (The Christian Faith Systematically Presented According to the Principles of the Evangelical Church) set forth with sufficient clearness his doctrines concerning religion and theology. The first work appeared in 1799, but was re-published by Schleiermacher in 1806, 1821, and 1831, and more recently by Professor Otto (3d edition, 1913). The first edition of *The Christian Faith* appeared in 1821—1822 and again in 1830 in an enlarged revision. In his *Addresses* Schleiermacher develops his basic ideas on the nature and value of religion. Among the educated Germans, he contends, religion is commonly despised, while among the French and English it is held in honor. This leads him to address them on the "Mysteries of Humanity" (*die Mysterien der Menschheit*). The essence of religion is neither thought nor action, but intuition and feeling. And such intuition (*Anschauung*) regards the *Universe*. For the term *Universe* Schleiermacher uses also such expressions as the "Heavenly" (*das Himmlische*), the "Eternal and Holy Destiny" (*das ewige und heilige Schicksal*), the "Exalted World Spirit" (*der hohe Weltgeist*), the "Spirit of the Universe" (*der Geist des Universums*), the "Eternal Providence" (*die ewige Vorsehung*), the "Living Deity" (*die lebendige Gottheit*). The thought of immortality in the sense of a life in another world, he believes, does not belong to religion. Intuition of the Universe is effected by the Universe itself. Every intuition is connected with feeling, and the strength of the feelings determines the degree of religiousness. The real origin of religion is effected in a person by an *experience*, which is like a "holy embrace" or a "virginal kiss." The Universe is reflected in nature, much more clearly, however, in man's inner life. In his inner life everyone experiences humanity, for every person is a "compend of humanity." Schleiermacher says: "Let us go to humanity; there we find material for religion." The religious feelings in man Schleiermacher describes as a "pious reverence for the Eternal and Invisible," humility, gratitude, joy, confidence, and trust. Religion is not brought about by doctrine, but in such a way that man, who is born with a religious disposition, realizes and actualizes it. If religion exists, it must be social. Religion creates the most perfect result of human sociability, an "academy of priests," "a chorus of friends," "a union of brethren." This unity of religious people is different from the historical Church, whose faults are to be explained by its union with the State. Hence the Church must be freed from the State. Religion must individualize itself, and this it has accomplished in the various positive religions. In Christ the truly divine is the glorious clearness, into which the great idea which He had come to represent, namely, that everything finite needs a higher mediation, to unite itself with the Deity, was de-



veloped. "His consciousness of the originality of his religion and of the originality of its purpose and power to impart itself (to others) and thus to create religion was at the same time the consciousness of his mediatorship and of deity. But Christ never claimed to be the only Mediator. Christianity therefore does not desire to be the only religious manifestation among men ruling forever, for Christ has pointed to the truth which should come after him." Brief as these statements are, they, nevertheless, show Schleiermacher's unchristian fundamentals. Schleiermacher repudiates the Holy Scriptures and every specific Christian doctrine in the traditional sense of the orthodox Church. In view of the Christian terminology which he consistently used, this judgment may seem harsh; but, after all, it is correct. By means of Christian expressions Schleiermacher in reality taught pantheistic paganism though he has been heralded as the "Reformer of the 19th Century."<sup>10</sup> Dr. F. Pieper's verdict is not too severe: "Schleiermacher, the 'father' of the theology of self-consciousness in the 19th century, denies the guilt of sin and the removal of the guilt of sin through the vicarious atonement of Christ, the eternal deity of Christ, the Holy Trinity, in short, all fundamentals of the Christian faith."<sup>11</sup> A more detailed study of his doctrines according to his dogmatic work *The Christian Faith* will prove this verdict to be founded on fact.

## 5

*Schleiermacher's mysticism.* — F. H. Jacobi (1743—1819, "a pagan in reason, a Christian in feelings") defined religion as "faith founded on feeling in the reality of the ideal." Schelling defined religion as "the union of the finite with the infinite, or as God's coming to self-consciousness in the world."<sup>12</sup> These definitions were adopted in a slightly modified form by Schleiermacher, who defined religion as the "feeling of absolute dependence upon God." By that very definition of religion Schleiermacher manifests himself as a pantheistic mystic; for the God whom he had in mind is not the personal, supramundane God, but only the "supreme Causality." Strong rightly explains his view thus: "Schleiermacher held that nature not only is grounded in the divine Causality, but fully expresses that Causality; there is no causative power in God for anything that is not real and actual. This doctrine does not essentially differ from Spinoza's *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*."<sup>13</sup> Hodge interprets his view as follows: "It is the fundamental principle of Schleiermacher's theory that religion resides

10) Cf. Pieper, *Christliche Dogmatik*, I, p. 145.

11) *Christliche Dogmatik*, I, p. 136

12) Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, I, p. 21.

13) *Systematic Theology*, I, p. 287.



not in the intelligence or the will or active powers, but in the sensibility. It is a form of feeling, a sense of absolute dependence. Instead of being, as we seem to be, individual, separate free agents, originating our own acts, we recognize ourselves as a part of a great whole, determined in all things by the great whole, of which we are a part. We find ourselves as finite creatures over against an infinite Being, in relation to whom we are as nothing. The Infinite is everything; and everything is only a manifestation of the Infinite."<sup>14</sup> Again: "Religion consists in feeling, . . . i. e., the consciousness that the finite is nothing in the presence of the Infinite — the individual in the presence of the universe. This consciousness involves the unity of the one and all, of God and man."<sup>15</sup>

*Schleiermacher's doctrine of revelation.* Since Schleiermacher teaches the absolute immediacy between man and God, there can be no revelation in the historic sense by God to sinful man. Revelation consists not in the communication of divine, spiritual truths to men, but only in providential influences by which a religious life is awakened in the soul. Schleiermacher does not claim for the Christian religion supreme absoluteness. The feeling of dependence upon God is found in the primitive pagan as well as in the enlightened Christian, and so absoluteness of religion is only a matter of degree according as this sense of dependence upon God reveals itself in an individual or a community. Nor can there be any inspiration in the Christian sense; there can be only intuitions of eternal truths differing with the degree of a person's religious feeling. Christianity, subjectively considered, consists in intuitions occasioned by the appearance of Christ. Christian theology is the logical analysis and logical elucidation of such intuitions. The Bible has no causative or normative authority at all; it is only a means of awakening in believers the religious intuitions experienced by the Apostles, so that they obtain similar intuitions of divine things.<sup>16</sup> It is not without reason that Schleiermacher rejected the old-fashioned term *Loci Communes* and substituted for this time-honored expression as the title of his dogmatic *Der Christliche Glaube* or *Die Glaubenslehre*.<sup>17</sup> By this new term he declared his renunciation of the *Schriftprinzip*.

*Schleiermacher's doctrine of the Trinity.* Having rejected Christian theism, Schleiermacher, of course, had no room for the Christian doctrine of the Triune God. To him God in Himself is the Father; God in Christ is the Son, and God in the Church,

14) Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, I, p. 65 f.

15) *Systematic Theology*, I, p. 173.

16) Cf. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, I, p. 66.

17) Cf. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, I, p. 42.



the Holy Spirit. His concept of God is at best Sabellian, though his view of God was lower than that of Sabellius. God is the "absolute Infinity" (*die einfache and absolute Unendlichkeit*), not a person, but simply "Being" with the single attribute of omnipotence. Other divine attributes express not what exists in God, but the effects which the absolute Infinity produces in us. The attributes of divine wisdom, goodness, holiness, and the like, simply mean that the "Supreme Causality" produces these attributes in us. This denial of the reality of the divine attributes is only the result of Schleiermacher's mystico-pantheistic doctrine of the divine immanence.

*Schleiermacher's doctrine of man.* According to Schleiermacher man is not a creature, created by God in His own image, but the "spirit" (*der Geist*, God) in the way, or form, in which it comes to self-consciousness on our earth (*der Geist, der nach Art und Weise unserer Erde zum Selbstbewusstsein sich gestaltet*). Man thus is an integral part of the world, but as such also an integral part of God. There is in man a consciousness of the world, a sort of lower consciousness, but also a God-consciousness which is God in us in the form of consciousness. Schleiermacher rejects the Biblical account of a *status integritatis*, asserting that man's original state was not at all ideally perfect, since his God-consciousness was not sufficiently strong to keep in check his self- or world-consciousness. The ideal state, in which the God-consciousness becomes victorious in man, is to be reached by *development*, or *evolution*. Schleiermacher frequently uses the term *flesh*, but by this he does not mean the corrupt fallen nature in the Christian sense of the term, but man's consciousness so far as it is related to the world, or his self-consciousness. So also he uses the term *spirit*, not in the sense of the Holy Spirit or of the new man wrought by the Holy Spirit in the believer through faith, but God in us, or the mere *Gottesbewusstsein*. Sin, in Schleiermacher's theology, is not the transgression of the divine Law, but man's feeling of the lack of the absolute control of the Absolute Being in him. The conviction that the "Highest Causality" really should rule supreme in him becomes the sense of guilt. From this feeling of sin and guilt arises man's feeling of the need of redemption. From all this it is obvious how superficial Schleiermacher's system of theology is. God to him is the mere Cause of things. Man is a revelation of this Cause. Sin is a feeling in man that he is not fully controlled by the "Supreme Cause." So also religion can mean nothing more in his theology than simply man's acknowledgment of God as the "absolute Being" and of himself as a form in which this Causality is revealed. Schleiermacher's mystic pan-



theism therefore does not go much beyond that of Hindu Brahmanism. Schleiermacher ultimately deifies man himself.

*Schleiermacher's doctrine of redemption.*<sup>18)</sup> To fit the idea of redemption into his system of absolute dependence, Schleiermacher must render his conception of redemption as superficial as that of sin. Redemption to him is nothing more than the giving of complete control to the God-consciousness in man. To accomplish this, man needs the stimulus of Jesus, who is the Ideal Man, and in whom the God-consciousness was supreme from the beginning. Man is redeemed by becoming like Christ, that is, by letting Christ's God-consciousness actuate, strengthen, and make perfect his own God-consciousness. In plain words, man becomes redeemed by imitating Christ or by doing good works after His example. With this scheme of theology the traditional doctrine of divine wrath and punishment, of course, does not agree. Sin and guilt are real only in our own consciousness or in our subjective apprehension of them. Like pain and pleasure, so also right and wrong are only subjective states or vices. Man is sinful and guilty only in his own feeling, not in the judgment of God. Sin, therefore, does not exist as an objective reality. At best it is an imperfection, a weakness, a having not yet attained; but there is nothing culpable about this. Schleiermacher's system of theology has some things in common with Mrs. Eddy's pantheistic system, known as Christian Science.

*Schleiermacher's doctrine of Christ.* To Schleiermacher religion (Christianity) is not a system of doctrine or a discipline, but a *living*, which has nothing to do with either the Law or the Gospel. This new living the Christian believer owes to Christ, who, though he is nothing else than a mere man who came into existence through his natural birth at Bethlehem, still is God in fashion as a man, just as man is God's mode of existence on earth. In Adam, God was only incompletely formed; in the second Adam, in Christ, God is completely formed, for in Him the idea of humanity is fully realized. In ordinary men the God-consciousness is overcome largely by his world-consciousness; but not so in Christ, in whom the conflict between God-consciousness and world-consciousness was overcome. How the miracle of the existence of such an Ideal Man could happen, Schleiermacher does not explain; but he accepts it as a fact, just as he accepts it as a fact that God manifests Himself in man. The difference between Christ and every other man is, after all, only one of degree. Christ's redeeming value and work therefore consists not in what He taught or did, but in what He is. As the Ideal Man He awakens the dormant God-consciousness in man to fuller activity and gives it

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18) Cf. "Schleiermacher's View of the Essence and Origin of Sin" in *The Christian Doctrine of Sin*, by Dr. Julius Mueller, pp. 341 ff.



victory over his self-consciousness. In view of this, Christ's atoning death, resurrection, ascension, session, and triumphant reign are of no import whatever. Good men have attested these things, but they have no religious value. What matters is the new life which is awakened by Christ's overwhelming God-consciousness. That is the constituting principle of the Church, and it is by union with the Church that this life passes over to individual believers.

*Schleiermacher's doctrine of the Church.* Since according to Schleiermacher man is "the existence-form" of God on earth, there is properly speaking no *ecclesia militans* and *triumphans* in the Christian sense. Schleiermacher admitted no personal salvation and personal existence of man after death. According to his view, all philosophy is against such a doctrine, and his whole system is a denial of it, though he says that the Christian must admit it on the authority of Christ. What, then, does the Church mean to Schleiermacher? Nothing more than a "Christ-redeemed" human society in which the God-consciousness has gained the ascendancy and in which the individual gains the ascendancy over his own self-consciousness ever more and more. Schleiermacher's statements regarding the Church, visible as well as invisible, are nebulous and unsatisfactory. Even R. H. Gruetzmacher admits that his presentation of the doctrine of eschatology is of lesser value than are his other presentations.<sup>19</sup> As a matter of fact, he was not much concerned with the eschatological aspect of the Church; what was of concern to him was the strengthening of the God-consciousness in humanity. Relieved of all metaphysical values, Schleiermacher's theology ultimately became totally ethical and social.<sup>20</sup>

*Other doctrines in summary.* It would lead us too far to state all theological views of Schleiermacher in detail. Let it be said, however, that he treated all other doctrines of the Christian faith in the same manner as those described above, fitting them into his theological system, by depriving them of their orthodox Christian content. Thus, for example, Christ did not actually die on Calvary, but His death was a mere sham death. Christ did not atone for our sins, but He died to induce men to struggle for the ascendancy of the God-consciousness within them. In other words, Schleiermacher championed a mystical theory of atonement. Schleiermacher's pantheistic system does not admit prayer in the Christian

19) *Textbuch zur systematischen Theologie und ihrer Geschichte*, page 30.

20) E. J. F. Arndt: "There is universal humanity; but that universal humanity expresses itself in numerous ways. It individuates itself; and each individual expression has its own worth. The individual's life task is to become, to express ever more clearly his unique self; and in doing so he expresses essential humanity. *Ethical Theory of Schleiermacher*, p. 24. *Theological Magazine of the Ev. Synod of North America*, Jan., 1934.



sense; it rather excludes prayer. An impersonal infinite Cause cannot hear prayer. Schleiermacher regarded the devil as nothing more than the "idea of evil"; there is no personal devil, as there is no sin. Schleiermacher's doctrine of sin renders repentance impossible, since man has nothing to repent of; and because he denies the atoning death of Christ, his theology prevents a true and living faith in the Christian sense. Schleiermacher's attitude toward the Holy Scriptures is well expressed in a letter to his friend Jacobi, in which he says: "The Bible is the original interpretation of the Christian faith-consciousness and for this remains so permanent that always it must be better understood and developed. This right of development I, as a Protestant theologian, will not permit anyone to curb. However, most assuredly I am of the opinion that the dogmatic language, as it has been developed since the time of Augustine, is so profound and rich that it is adequate for possible use of philosophy or dogmatics as long as it is used reasonably."<sup>21</sup> This "reasonable handling" of Scripture was illustrated by Schleiermacher in his rejection of the proof-text method and its interpretation according to its scope or totality. Schleiermacher was indeed as much of a rationalist as he was a mystic and enthusiast.

## 6

But why, then, his vast and permanent influence upon both positive and liberal theologians? One can readily understand why such extreme Liberals as A. Schweizer, De Wette, Biedermann, Pfeleiderer, and others should follow Schleiermacher in his destructive theology, but it is hard to see why such conservative theologians as Nitzsch, J. Mueller, Tholuck, Twesten, and even Julius Koestlin should regard themselves, to a certain degree at least, as his followers. Still more amazing perhaps is the fact that Charles Hodge, after having shown that Schleiermacher's whole theology was destructive, remarks: "Can we doubt that he is singing those praises now? To whomsoever Christ is God, St. John assures us Christ is a Savior."<sup>22</sup> Hodge, of course, knew Schleiermacher personally and, as he says, often attended his church, in which hymns were sung that were "always evangelical and spiritual in an eminent degree, filled with praise and gratitude to our Redeemer." Hodge personally seems to have esteemed Schleiermacher very highly in spite of his unorthodox tenets.<sup>23</sup> And his statement that Schleiermacher may now be singing the praises of Christ in

21) Cf. Horst Stephan, *Geschichte der evangelischen Theologie*, p. 93.

22) Cf. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, II, p. 440.

23) Some of Schleiermacher's sermons, in which he emphasizes the ethical relation and duties of Christians are indeed very inspiring. Cf. *Predigten ueber den christlichen Hausstand* von Dr. F. Schleiermacher. Vierte Auflage. Berlin. 1860.



heaven was no doubt a fervent wish flowing from his kindly heart. But even Strong is inclined to believe that Schleiermacher died a Christian death,<sup>24)</sup> though as D. Schenkel relates the story of his last Holy Communion, in the intimate circle of his loved ones, the celebration bordered almost on blasphemy.<sup>25)</sup> What, then, explains the wide and permanent influence of Schleiermacher on theologians of all manner of doctrinal trends?

There is no doubt that Schleiermacher, by retaining the Christian terminology and veiling his liberal tenets in forms which orthodox believers understand in the traditional Christian sense, exerted a great influence upon all who in the gloom and hopelessness of rationalism hungered and thirsted after truth. Thousands of true Christians no doubt listened to Schleiermacher's sermons without being aware that he was not offering them the Christian faith of the Reformation. Even learned, though not too critical theologians were misled by Schleiermacher's crafty approach to the problems of religion and theology. Thus Claus Harms, famous for the publication of his "Ninety-five Theses" in 1817 — the tercentenary of the Reformation — wrote of Schleiermacher's *Addresses*: "*Schleiermacher's Reden schlugen mir die Rationalisten tot*" (Schleiermacher's *Addresses* for me did away with Rationalists).<sup>26)</sup> After the publication of his "Ninety-five Theses," Harms was drawn into a controversy with Schleiermacher, in which he defended the fundamental Lutheran truths against Schleiermacher's deviations from the orthodox faith. Nevertheless, in an introductory letter to the series Harms writes: "Dear Doctor, you were my teacher, my master, and what I have become, if indeed I have become anything, that I have become in a large measure through your ingenious (*geistvollen*) writings, and I shall and will always remain your follower" (*Juenger*).<sup>27)</sup> Of course, Harms did not remain blind to the doctrinal deceitfulness of the Berlin theologian for any length of time. Horst Stephan writes of this: "The repristination theologians at first said resignedly with Claus Harms: 'He who begat me, had no bread for me,' but very soon (Hengstenberg's *Evangelische Kirchenzeitung* already in 1829) attacked him openly."<sup>28)</sup> The great danger lurking in Schleiermacher's constant use of the traditional orthodox dogmatical terms appears from the

24) Cf. *Systematic Theology*, II, p. 740.

25) Cf. Friedrich Schleiermacher. *Ein Lebens- und Charakterbild*, page 604 f.

26) Meusel, *Kirchliches Handlexikon*, p. 166.

27) *Briefe zu einer naeheren Verstaendigung ueber verschiedene meine Thesen betreffende Punkte. Nebst einem namhaften Briefe an den Herrn Dr. Schleiermacher.* Von Claus Harms, Archidiaconus an der St. Nicolaikirche in Kiel. 1818.

28) *Geschichte der Evangelischen Theologie*, p. 127.



shrewd way in which he composed the various theses of his *Glau-benslehre*. Thus Thesis No. 128, "Concerning Regeneration," reads: "The divine operation, upon which rests the beginning of the new life, we designate with Scripture by the expression *justification*; the change, however, which in it takes place within man, by the expression *conversion*." Or Thesis No. 129, "Concerning Justification": "That God justifies man includes that to him [man] his sins are forgiven, and he is acknowledged as a child of God. The justification of a person, however, takes place only inasmuch as man has true faith in the Redeemer." These seemingly Christian theses, fortified by Scripture passages for proper proof, appear indeed as fully orthodox,<sup>29)</sup> but in his expositions of the propositions, Schleiermacher shows his complete, radical departure from the orthodox theology of believing Biblical theologians. This deceitful hypocrisy of Schleiermacher in misusing orthodox terminology is characteristic of modern Liberals. Present-day Modernism speaks of "liberal Christianity" to deceive trustful, but unwary church members. The contention of John Horsch that Schleiermacher was the father of modern religious Liberalism is indeed true.<sup>30)</sup> Obviously, hosts of orthodox laymen and theologians followed Schleiermacher, believing that, after all, he had a Christian message to offer, and so put the best construction on his unorthodox theological expositions.

This deceitfulness, however, has a yet more sinister aspect. H. R. Mackintosh, though declaring that "it is only in a relative sense . . . that we can speak of the *Dogmatic* of Schleiermacher as an authentically Christian book," nevertheless, praises it, because "it makes the Person of Christ central and all-determining, and places the whole concept of salvation under the rubric of sin and grace."<sup>31)</sup> This is both true and not true. It is true since Schleiermacher's entire theological system is centered in the thought of man's freedom through Christ from his lower world-consciousness to perfect God-consciousness. It is not true since Schleiermacher rejected the entire doctrine of sin and grace, redemption and salvation, justification and sanctification in the traditional Christian sense. Mackintosh admits this when he writes: "We shall search his *Dogmatic* in vain for the truth that in the coming of Christ, in the simple fact of his being here, God Himself

29) R. B. Brandt: "Schleiermacher did not actually refute orthodoxy. But his work had the effect of superannuating it. He presented an alternative more suited to the modes of thinking, the intellectual currents of a critical and scientific age." *The Philosophy of Schleiermacher*, p. 307. What is here said, is partly true and partly false. But the verdict shows how hard it is to judge Schleiermacher rightly.

30) *Modern Religious Liberalism*, p. 52.

31) *Types of Modern Theology*, p. 100.



stooped down to save us." And he quotes the modern Rationalist Herrmann of Marburg as saying: "I regard myself as infinitely nearer to Nicaea than either Schleiermacher or Ritschl."<sup>32)</sup> Schleiermacher's care in expressing his pantheistic theology in orthodox Christian terms therefore was not accidental; it was not merely a clever attempt to deceive, but a well-planned attack not so much indeed on crass rationalism as rather upon orthodox Christianity. In an essay "Schleiermacher Today" G. B. Wellman has this to say of him: "Schleiermacher began and ruled the nineteenth century of Continental Protestant theology. . . . *He has been the inspiration of the modern approach to the study of religion* [italics our own] and the founder of a new method of the understanding of the life of Jesus."<sup>33)</sup>

Wellman's words: "*He has been the inspiration of the modern approach to the study of religion,*" explain more fully why Schleiermacher in liberal circles has always been popular. Already in 1868 D. Schenkel explained Schleiermacher's popularity in liberal circles when he wrote: "For years, the dogmatic controversy was centered in the contrast between rationalism and supernaturalism. Only one or the other possibility (*Moeglichkeit*) was recognized: Christianity was either a natural or a supernatural phenomenon. Thus expressed, this contrast could never be reconciled. . . . In his [Schleiermacher's] concept of religion the removal of this contrast was given. Religion as such was to him 'immediate feeling,' or as he expressed himself later, 'immediate self-consciousness' and indeed of this the highest degree. But by this very assumption religion was regarded at once both as natural and as supernatural."<sup>34)</sup>

What, then, did Schleiermacher do to make himself so very popular with religious Liberals? He pointed out to them a way to avoid both the utter negation of crass rationalism and the implicit trust of Christian belief in the spiritual truths of Holy Scripture. Between the two (he shows) there is the middle way of theological dissimulation. It is interesting to note that F. Kattenbusch points out that, after all, there are no absolute antitheses between Ritschl and Schleiermacher despite the great differences existing between their theological approaches and methods. From Schleiermacher, Ritschl learned that the dogmatician dare not ignore the *historic development of Christianity*.<sup>35)</sup> Does that mean that Ritschl learned from Schleiermacher the method of theological dissembling? But even more interesting is the remark of Kattenbusch that also

32) *Types of Modern Theology*, p. 90.

33) *Journal of Religion*, p. 172.

34) *Friedrich Schleiermacher, ein Lebens- und Charakterbild*, page 487 f.

35) *Von Schleiermacher zu Ritschl*. 1903, pp. 57 ff.



Troeltsch<sup>36)</sup> found a fine essential understanding (ein gutes Sachverstaendnis) of the problem of religion in Schleiermacher's theological works; only, he holds, Schleiermacher must not be consulted as a theologian, but merely as a philosopher. And so, Kattenbusch judges, the grandsons will restore the grandfathers to new reverence, since "comparative religion" may develop into a sure form of neo-romanticism.<sup>37)</sup> In short, it is not at all Schleiermacher's merit that he made Christ central in his theology (if indeed we may speak of merit in this case), or that, as others have said, he was able to systematize the doctrine of faith from the viewpoint of its totality, but that (establishing modern Liberalism) he pointed out the way to avoid both the absolute denial of extreme rationalism and the honest Scripture theology of Christian orthodoxy. There was a middle road of double dealing, of saying yes and no at the same time.

Of course, this new approach necessitated a special manipulation of Scripture. Schleiermacher did not regard Scripture as the source and norm of faith, just as little as the crass rationalists had regarded it thus. He therefore had to find a new source and norm of faith, and this he located in man's God-consciousness, or in his Christian experience. Schleiermacher thus became the father of modern religious subjectivism which in the development of theological possibilities is truly endless. Religious experimentalism, in the final analysis, leaves no other authority in theology than man's own subjective feelings or intuitions. Religious truths, it holds, are not what Holy Scripture teaches, but what man's own thinking or willing or feeling determine to be the truth. It is true, Schleiermacher shifted the rationalistic emphasis from thinking (Kant's intellectualism) to feeling; but whether one regards the mind or the heart as the source of faith, there is no material difference in the final result of one's theological speculation. After all, subjective theology is, as Karl Barth puts it, *Selbstmitteilung* (self-revelation).<sup>38)</sup> Schleiermacher's theology is therefore in the final analysis nothing else than his own speculative philosophy. And that is true of all schools of liberal theologians who follow subjective systems in the spirit of Schleiermacher. Besides the "Theology of Feeling" (Schleiermacher) Mackintosh in his *Types of Modern Theology* treats the "Theology of Speculative Rational-

36) H. R. Mackintosh: "Troeltsch obviously felt himself called to assume the task that Schleiermacher had left half done. He is quoted as having said that Schleiermacher's program remains the great program of all scientific theology; it only needs working out, not the substitution of new methods." *Types of Modern Theology*, p. 189.

37) *Ibid.*, p. 79.

38) *Zwischen den Zeiten. Das Wort in der Theologie von Schleiermacher bis Ritschl.* 1928, p. 94.



ism" (Hegel), the "Theology of Moral Values" (Ritschl), the "Theology of Scientific Religious History" (Troeltsch), the "Theology of Paradox" (Kierkegaard), and the "Theology of the Word of God" (Barth). But though these variant and often contradictory schools differ from that of Schleiermacher in many ways (in basic points quite radically), they all have in common with Schleiermacher's theology the principle of regarding truth in the light of their own subjective feeling or thinking or believing. Everyone of them is an *Ich-Theologe*. Subjectivism inheres in them all, whether they call themselves religious experimentalists or not. Karl Barth in the article referred to above rejects the viewpoint and method of Schleiermacher as basically false. To him theology should not be *Selbstmitteilung*, but *Gottmitteilung*. But in the final analysis, since the Barthian school rejects Holy Scripture as the standard of faith, it, too, must rely on *Selbstmitteilung* for its theology, since outside the Bible there is no revelation of Gospel and salvation truth. It is true, Barth treats the Bible apparently with the greatest reverence; but so also did Schleiermacher and Ritschl and so do all modernistic experimentalists. However, since they reject Scripture as God's Word, they *eo ipso* also reject the divine truth which God sets forth to us in the Bible. Schleiermacher's service for modern liberal theology has been recognized by Carl Stange in his helpful essay *Die geschichtliche Bedeutung Schleiermachers*, in which he writes: "It is unfair to criticize him [Schleiermacher] that his theology does not justify the demands which we make [of theology] today, after we essentially, under his influence, have obtained a deepened historical understanding of Christianity."<sup>39</sup> These words indeed are a tragic admission.

There are, as Dr. Pieper points out in his *Christliche Dogmatik*, only two types of theology; the orthodox, Christian Scripture theology and the rationalistic non-Christian subjective *Ich-Theologie*. The two are contradictory and mutually exclusive. One is of God; the other, of conceited, perverted reason. One is supernatural and apprehended by faith; the other is natural, earthly, carnal, and the product of the human mind. (Cf. James 3:15-17.) Realizing this fact, the crude, but sincere rationalists preceding Schleiermacher cast overboard the entire Christian doctrine of Scripture and Christian orthodoxy and with it everything supernatural. But by this very fact they committed theological suicide. They no longer had any theology left nor any philosophy for all that. Then came Schleiermacher, cleverly reconciling evangelical theology with rationalism, but in such a way that while retaining the ancient Christian expressions, he fully disavowed Christian orthodoxy and developed an essentially pagan theology within Chris-

39) *Zeitschrift fuer systematische Theologie*, 1933—1934, p. 698.



tendom. Sin, man's lack of perfect God-consciousness, is really nothing serious, nothing condemning, but only a hindrance in the exercise of man's God-consciousness; and besides, sin is never individual, but only social. Christ's personal activity today is replaced by community activity; for as the community shares in the life of sin, so also it reaches collectively the requisite God-consciousness. Schleiermacher was thus the first to assert the modern idea of social religion, or the "social gospel." Christ's redemptive activity merely consists in this, that the Redeemer receives mankind into the power of His God-consciousness. By sharing Christ's God-consciousness and conquering his sin-consciousness, man becomes redeemed. But Schleiermacher's God-consciousness is nothing more than the pantheistic divine immanence. Redemption, then, must be communal. It is accomplished when the sinless perfection of Christ is communicated to society. According to Schleiermacher, Christianity is fundamentally ethical, and he enunciates the Kantian tenet that Christianity is essentially morality. Christ did not fulfill the Law for us, but His perfect fulfillment of the Law is the principle of our new obedience. Christ did not atone for man's sins, but His vicarious satisfaction merely reveals His sympathy for mankind. When man suffers for the sins of the world, he, too, suffers vicariously, though really not the individual, but only humanity as such suffers for sin. Schleiermacher contends that there is no objective reconciliation, but Christ, as the representative of a new order in humanity, causes man to understand that he must fully realize the part which he must play in his own reconciliation; and reconciliation is nothing else than subjective communion with Christ, and so with God, the absolute Causality (*unio mystica*). Forgiveness, or peace with God, is man's subjective feeling of being sure of his salvation. Justification is transformation, accomplished when Christ's God-consciousness is imparted to men. Man's pious, religious feeling, or his experience, is his supreme authority of religion.

As one considers these basic views of Schleiermacher's system, he sees at once how entirely the Christian doctrine has been discarded by him. Schleiermacher's *Ich-Theologie* has left untouched not a single tenet of the Christian faith; and yet it is at the same time a repudiation of Christianity (not perhaps in form, but in essence) so skillfully done that many, deceived by his orthodoxy of expression, still believe that Schleiermacher has a Christian message and is entitled to the name of a Christian theologian.

In the *Christian Century* (Nov. 3, 1943) A. Campbell Garnett, in an article entitled "The Christian View of Man," praises Reinhold Niebuhr because in his recent work *The Nature and Destiny of Man* he "succeeded in reconciling the major tenets of traditional



Protestant theology with a full acceptance of the findings of modern science and the historical criticism of the Bible." He says: "This in itself is a striking achievement." Niebuhr's "achievement," however, is none other than was Schleiermacher's, even though as a Barthian, Niebuhr repudiates Schleiermacher's mystico-pantheism. Both reconcile Protestant theology with the findings of modern science and the historical criticism of the Bible in such a way that, as St. Paul says, the cross of Christ is made "of none effect." (1 Cor. 2:17.) That is the tragedy of Schleiermacher's theological activity.

But in this very fact Schleiermacher's lasting influence finds its real explanation. His special type of theological interpretation may now be dead, though pantheism as a vital principle in liberal theology will always endure; but his theological approach and method, his rationalistic overbridging of the contradictions of faith and reason, will never be dead. Schleiermacher, in his fundamental conception of liberal theology, was far greater and more radical than were Ritschl, Troeltsch, Kierkegaard, Barth, and other Liberals. He is still the *didaskalos* of modern theology; all others are mere disciples. Schleiermacher ever remains the great rationalistic empiricist, the way-preparing Modernist, rejecting the Christian content of sacred theology while seemingly professing it by his consistent use of orthodox terminology, repudiating Scripture and yet for his own purpose employing it diligently, teaching men not to be crass rationalists and yet also not to be Biblical believers, a man of great vision, of overwhelming personality, of deep insight, of varied interests, but at the same time misusing his splendid talents in the interest of rationalistic untruth.

The letters which Schleiermacher wrote to his father during the period of his Moravian connections (at Niesky and Barby) are most revealing. They tell the story first of Christian faith and then of unchristian apostasy. In one of his letters Schleiermacher writes: "In this brief time I have experienced much: much on my part which is evil; much on the part of the Savior, which is gracious. On my part I say: 'I deserve wrath'; the Lamb of Calvary cries: 'I have redeemed thee.'" It was the Christian Schleiermacher who wrote these words. However, when at Barby the break came with the United Brethren, he wrote to his father a note of infinite sadness, far more so than he himself could realize. He said: "Dearest Father, if you believe that without faith there is no salvation, at least not in yonder life, and that there is no peace in this life except one has faith—then pray God that He may impart it to me, for so far as I am concerned that faith is now lost." 40)

40) D. Schenkel, *Friedrich Schleiermacher*, pp. 16 and 19.



"Fuer mich ist er [der Glaube] jetzt verloren!" That is the weary and despondent cry which resounds throughout the whole of Schleiermacher's rationalistic theology. Schleiermacher lost his Christian faith, and it is doubtful whether he ever regained it even when in the circle of his loved ones he celebrated his last Communion. The assurance of salvation which he claimed in that hour was, we fear, not true Christian assurance based by faith on the Gospel promise, but his own peculiar type of *Selbstgewissheit*, or self-assurance, which is no more than self-delusion. Schleiermacher's last confession was not that of Paul or of Luther or of all other saints who die trusting in Christ's blood shed for them on Calvary.

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JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

## The One Hundredth Anniversary of the Franconian Settlements in Michigan, 1845—1945

### A Brief Survey of the Beginnings

Loehe was the man who, under the guidance of God, was responsible for the Franconian Settlements in Michigan, with Frankenmuth as a starting point in 1845. Craemer, Graebner, and Sievers were the pioneers who established the first colonies. Also the names of Lochner, Auch, Deindoerfer, Roebbelen, and others have been written into the early history. Nor can we leave Wyneken out of the picture.

#### 1. Wyneken

Friedrich Konrad Dietrich Wyneken was born at Verden, Hannover, May 13, 1810. He studied theology at Goettingen and Halle. As a private tutor in the home of Pastor V. Hanfstengel he learned to know His Savior better and through Him the way to salvation, after which time he diligently studied the Bible and consecrated himself fully to the service of his Lord.