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THE MODERNIST THEORY OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE

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MODERNISM as a theological movement is the result of a philosophy, or perhaps of a number of different philosophical systems. But any system of philosophy or metaphysics, if it is to claim any validity or truth must rest upon a theory of knowledge. Modernist theology can claim no exemption from the necessity of a critical theory of knowledge; it cannot say—here is my theology, here is the philosophy at its basis, and then try to escape a theory of knowledge which can justify its fundamental principles.

Nor does Modernism usually in its best representatives attempt to avoid such a theory of knowledge. On the contrary it proclaims such a theory and when we examine it, we find it to be the anti-intellectualism which has been so predominant in religious thought since Kant and Schleiermacher, and which still seems to dominate in America, though signs are not wanting, as Professor Brunner of Zurich has indicated, that this wave of anti-intellectualism in many quarters has reached its height and is beginning to wane. As long as it is supposed to support religious life and even belief, it is popular; but when its logical results in scepticism as to the objects of religious beliefs and the validity of these beliefs are clearly seen, then enthusiasm for it begins to cool and questions begin to arise as to whether we can dethrone the intellect, banish it from religion, and retain any objectively valid religious faith.

In the present crisis, it is well for the Christian Church to know what Modernism is in its fundamental principles.

One of its underlying principles is the denial of any external authority in religious knowledge, and the assertion that religion and Christianity are a life, not a doctrine. The outcry against authoritative doctrine is not new of course. It has been fashionable for years. To realize this one need only recall the dispute between Dreyer and Professor Kaftan of Berlin in 1888-90, and then turn to the recent remarks on the subject by Professor Wernle in his "Introduction to the Study of Theology", in 1921. It has been said and is being said that all doctrine is dead and constitutes too heavy a burden for religion to bear. One would not need to take this outcry against doctrine very seriously, as Professor Ihmels of Leipsic once said, if it came only from those

who were hostile to religion and Christianity. The seriousness of the matter results from the fact that it is usually in the interest of religious and Christian faith that authoritative doctrine is to be banished as a burden too heavy to be borne. The idea is that doctrine is killing religion and Christianity, that they consist in life, not in doctrine. The essential thing, then, in both natural religion and in Christianity is experience and life, we are told, and that the "outworn frame-works", to use Dr. Fosdick's phrase, must be discarded and new ones discovered which shall better symbolize the Christian life and experience.

This, of course, is the natural result of the old rationalism which also gave up all external authority in religious knowledge. The "kernel" of rational truth, which rationalism supposed was clothed in temporally conditioned form in Christian doctrine, being thus temporally conditioned, afforded no permanency for Christianity. Hence in Germany Dreyer, and in France Sabatier, demanded an undogmatic Christianity. Doctrines are only the symbols which clothe or express Christian life, and are outgrowths of that life, having thus no permanent objective truth or validity. In America Dr. Fosdick has described Christian doctrines as merely the intellectual frameworks of an abiding Christian experience. The frame-works change while the life abides. The life can fold up the old frameworks and cast them aside as a garment, clothing itself anew with new garments which too will one day be outworn and cast away.

This view seems to have a great attraction for the so-called modern mind. Once a man is liberated from binding beliefs, he may resort to the easy philosophy of pragmatism or sink in what the late Dr. Kuyper called the "bog of mysticism".

But let us ask ourselves seriously what are the results of this theory of religious knowledge, for a theory of knowledge it is, and as such cannot escape critical investigation.

(a) In the first place we must give up Christianity. When we have separated Christianity from all facts, and regard its doctrines as only the product of religious life, we have done away with Christianity altogether, because we have done away with everything which distinguishes Christianity from the natural religious sentiment of man. Of course, it is true that Christianity is a life. It is also true that Christian doctrine cannot produce this life. Paul taught this ages before the Modernist. Man is dead in sin, and the revelation of divine truth will fail to produce life, because the natural (sinful) man receiveth not the things of the Spirit (I Cor. 2:14).

But the Modernist does not mean this. He means to say that the essence of Christianity consists in a life which precedes, and is independent of, the Christian facts and doctrines, and that doctrine is the product of life, and is merely symbolic, i. e. not objectively valid or true. This leaves nothing but the bare religious

sentiment of men, and it is a grave error to suppose that Christianity is the product of man's religious sentiment. Christian life is produced by the Holy Spirit, but it rests on the facts and doctrines of Christ's redemptive work contained in the New Testament.

(b) Furthermore, even supposing that we did violence to any historically justifiable idea of Christianity, and identified it arbitrarily with a mystic life, we would have no basis for affirming either the finality or truth of Christianity. For this life might attain supposedly higher levels and need more elevated doctrinal symbols in which to clothe itself. The Modernist sometimes affirms that Christian life is the product of God's Spirit and so is final. But in so doing they abandon their position by asserting a great doctrine which is not the product or clothing of the Christian life, but which is its condition. Nor can it be proved that this life is the *true* life if the norm of truth be drawn in pragmatic fashion from the life. For this supposedly Christian life contains no norms of truth. Christian life is the true life because it depends on Christ's redemption applied to the individual by the Holy Spirit. But here are asserted great facts and doctrines of the New Testament, independent of our Christian life, and at its basis.

In a word, if Christianity is separated from the great supernatural facts and truths of the New Testament, then all that differentiates it from the natural religious sentiment is gone, and we have no Christianity left.

(c) But we cannot stop here. This theory of religious knowledge involves complete religious scepticism as regards our knowledge of God. Man's natural religious sentiment or religious consciousness depends upon an idea or doctrine of God antecedent to the religious consciousness and conditioning it. Everything which characterizes the religious sentiment as religious, depends upon an idea of its object—God. But according to this theory of knowledge, the idea of God is only a symbol. It has, and can have, no objective truth or validity. Hence the man who adopts this position cannot really believe in God. Complete religious scepticism results. Belief in God involves some knowledge about God. Great doctrines are presupposed in religious belief. Is there a God? Can God be known? How can God be known? Has He revealed Himself in nature, the human mind, and Scripture? Without answers to these great doctrinal questions belief in God is impossible. The old theologians used to say that faith consisted in knowledge, assent, and trust. In every act of faith there abideth these three—knowledge, assent, trust. No doubt the greatest of these is trust. But just as love, though greater, according to Paul, than faith and hope, is nevertheless dependent on faith and hope, just so, trust is always dependent on knowledge and assent. Once affirm that life and experience precede doctrine, complete scepticism must result. Nothing objectively true about God can be affirmed. Dr. Fosdick, for

example, in his Cole Lecture, following Sabatier, clearly acknowledges that his own religious ideas or doctrines may not be valid for the next generation. This does away with all truth, for truth knows no past, present, or future. What is true is true for all time and everywhere.

(d) But this position which we are examining critically not only involves complete religious scepticism. It cuts deeper. It must do away with all norms of truth. The distinction between right and wrong, this is an idea, a doctrine, a truth. Call them by what name you please, right and wrong are ideas or valid doctrines which condition moral life and conduct. All life and experience are conditioned by norms of truth which are not contained in the life itself, but must be obtained from either reason or revelation.

(e) And this is not all. If this theory of knowledge be true scepticism in natural science must follow. If all our categories of scientific knowledge are the product of sensation and feeling, they too have only symbolic validity, and we are overwhelmed by a complete scepticism in every sphere of knowledge, as T. H. Green of Oxford abundantly proved when he refuted the sceptic Hume in his Introduction to the latter's Essay Concerning the Human Understanding.

It is no wonder then, as Professor Brunner remarks, that in Europe the zeal for this anti-intellectualism has begun to cool. Unfortunately, however, we are usually behind the times in America. We realize, of course, that Modernists do not usually follow the logic of their position. They are fortunately inconsistent. Dr. Bavinck in his Reformed Dogmatics recalls the case of the Pietists who decried doctrine and yet sought to convert children to Christianity by use of the catechism. Of course they did. How could they convert anyone without telling the old, old story of Jesus and His love which led Him to die on the Cross for our sins. But this old, old story is of course just Christian doctrine, New Testament doctrine.

Other classes of Modernists, no doubt, would repudiate this entire theory of knowledge, and make reason their authority in religious knowledge. Then they become rationalists, substituting religious philosophy for the Christian revelation. But we think their number is not so large as those who adhere in a more or less consistent way to the theory which we have been criticizing. Very likely there are many Modernists of all classes who refuse to follow the logic of their fundamental presuppositions and principles. But the laws of logic are stubborn things, just as stubborn as facts. To abandon logic is to abandon the laws of human thought, and to do this is to commit intellectual suicide. Sooner or later the flood of scepticism will burst through the dams of religious sentiment and overwhelm any Church that accepts the Modernist theory of knowledge.

REVELATION OR DISCOVERY

Professor GEORGE JOHNSON, Ph.D.

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"THERE is an art," said Coleridge, "of which man should be master,—the art of reflection." Let us reflect upon Revelation, and its contradictory, Discovery.

I

"The baptism of John," asked Christ, "Whence was it? From heaven or from men?" This question recognizes the difference between Revelation and Discovery. We may ask a similar question.—That knowledge of God and His will which religion finds indispensable, whence is it? From heaven? If so, it is revealed. From men? If so, it is discovered.

The world religions are all on the side of Revelation. So true is this statement that revelation and religion are correlative terms. All known religions claim some knowledge of God. Lowest are those in which men worship the objects of nature, and recognize the divine in signs and wonders, oracles and medicine men. But never do they claim that such knowledge is a human discovery. It is a disclosure of the being they take to be God. Ethical religions believe in a personal God who speaks by personal agencies. Hammurabi claimed that the laws he published came from the sun god, Shamash. Mohammed asserted that what he wrote in the Koran were the divine communications that had been entrusted to his care. It is not necessary for our proof that these stories be true. We mention them merely in support of our statement that all known religions appeal to Revelation. And this is necessary for religion. Science relates us to the world, ethics to the universe of moral principle, æsthetics to the beautiful; but while the true, the good, and the beautiful are all needed in religion, they do not constitute the essential thing in religion. Religion is unique. In it we are related through Revelation to a power supernatural, superhuman, omnipresent, eternal, divine, and personal.

Christianity is the absolute religion. Nevertheless historically it is one of the world-religions. It claims to possess a knowledge of God and His will revealed at sundry times, and finally in Jesus Christ, the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. Note carefully how Christianity thinks of this Revelation. It holds that since the relation between God and man is personal, there must be interchange of thought and common interest in action. God made Himself known first in creation, and all that is and all that happens are but a continuation of the first divine disclosure. But to this activity of the divine there must correspond an activity of the human. Man must recognize and acknowledge, and this is also due to the divine power. "There is a spirit in man," as Elihu said, "and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." But this does not create its

object. It is not a discovery, but a reception. When then the Divine disclosure is joined to this universal ability to perceive, we have General Revelation, appealing to all, perceivable in and by itself, and understandable by all.

Sufficiency is a function of need. What is enough for a man in one situation may be inadequate for the same man in a different situation. For man in his present condition General Revelation is not enough. Man is sinful, and his sin has paralyzed his abilities and darkened his heart. He needs more than information, just as the patient sick and dying needs more than lectures on Pathology and *Materia Medica*. The sick man needs the physician. The sinner needs the Saviour. But General Revelation says nothing about a Saviour. It is dreadfully deficient for the soul that is sick and dying. The latter needs information about a love that turns mercy and pardons transgressions, and needs a person who is this love incarnate. But this is more than word; it is deed. None of this has been found in General Revelation, not even if we grant with Thoreau that the universe is wider than our views of it. Do not the world religions, Christianity excepted, confirm this statement? Many think that each of these religions is so admirably suited to its adherents, that it were better not to attempt to displace it with another. But look closer and reflect. Is it not rather true that while each represents the longing of the hearts that serve it, it knows not the way by which these longings can be satisfied, and therefore it leaves these hearts beating anxiously in the shadow of their sins.

Christianity claims to possess a sufficient Revelation. God has visited His people and made known to them the way of life. This has been called Special Revelation because it meets man's specific need as a sinner. It brings God close so that the soul crushed by sin and powerless in the presence of evil may be forgiven and enter into fellowship with God. How admirable is this divine approach! How satisfyingly it communicates to us the thought of God and provides for mutual activity! Down through the centuries it has held its conquering way. The false beliefs into which men had fallen could not permanently resist its advance. Animism, fetichism, polytheism, henotheism, were all successively overcome by it, for in it was the irresistible power of God's saving love seeking its beloved. This love at last became incarnate in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ and entered thus into the heart of the creation. But this Jesus Christ not only taught but worked. He was active in word and deed, as is witnessed by the manger of Bethlehem, the Cross of Calvary, the empty Tomb, and the opening cloud. Thus the Special Revelation aims not merely to interest scientists and philosophers by informing the reason, nor to enlist the moralists by discourses on virtue and duty, nor to give men that ecstatic joy in God so highly prized by the mystics, but its goal is that which is greater than any of these singly or all of them taken together,—salvation. What is salvation?

It is what eye hath not seen, as Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, nor ear heard, nor what entered into the heart of man. It is what God has prepared for them that love Him, and this only the Spirit of God Himself can reveal. This is the message of the Special Revelation.

Evangelical Christianity makes a double claim. It is the religion of the Special Revelation, and this latter is identical with Holy Scripture. Holy Scripture is a record and much more. For God is with it, and therefore he who stands in the presence of Scripture stands in the presence of God. It tells of the great saving deeds of God performed in all the centuries but culminating in the Cross of the Saviour. There Jesus Christ extended His arms and gathered to Himself the ages past and still to be. There He made atonement for the sins of His people, and in this action is manifested the ultimate truth about God and man and the way of salvation. As Huxley said, Time whose tooth gnaws away everything is powerless against truth. Such imperishable truth Evangelical Christianity claims to have, and therefore it offers itself as supremely satisfying, complete, absolute, and final.

II

Many contemporary thinkers do not agree with the concept of Revelation as we explain it. They would replace it with the notion of Discovery. They believe in God. They believe also in a divine action upon man, but this action is within. What is apparent is that some races and some individuals are more religious than others. Evidently there is a possibility of progress in the knowledge of God, but on what is this dependent? Not on fresh revelations from God, but on the ripening of insight that leads to Discovery. Advance in religion is thus similar to progress in science. All that we can know is already present in some sense in our world, but much of it, perhaps the greater part, is hidden and therefore unknown. What is needed is not new data, but keener observation and more rigorous thinking. When these are operative, discoveries of permanent value result.

What makes this view logically necessary? We would answer, adherence to the principles of naturalism in general and to the concept of evolution in particular. We may put the argument of the believers in Discovery as follows. The concept of evolution has proved useful in the biological sciences. Why may it not prove so in the sciences of religion? Examine the Holy Scriptures. Are they not indubitably a product of evolution? Are not the books of Holy Scripture composites, somewhat as the rocks are made of layers representing various periods? Is Christianity not akin to its chronological and geographical neighbors? Do we not clarify our understanding of most of the Old Testament and much of the New when we recognize in each the presence of widely prevalent myths? Are not the religious phenomena of Christianity psychologically the same as those found in the ethnic faiths? What are conversion, inspiration,

and prophecy, parables and miracles, but higher forms of the magic, divining, and soothsaying of the primitives?

Thinking and arguing thus, the advocate of Discovery sees only progressive changes in the understanding of the naturally given, where the believer in Revelation recognizes inpourings of a creative divine. When the latter asserts that Christianity is therefore unique, for it has this divine influx in a sense that no other religion has, the former rejoins that Christianity is but one of the world religions. The content of what the Evangelical Christian calls Revelation is thus not information due to God's creative and inspiring action, but is what man himself has wrested from an unwilling universe by trial and error for the most part, or now and then by those sudden insights which in their ignorance men call genius.

Which of these two contradictory views should we accept? We unhesitatingly declare for Revelation. Let us compare further the two concepts; let us give a reason for the choice we have made.

We agree with those who adopt Discovery that God is and must be immanent in His universe, but we also believe that He is and must be transcendent, meaning by transcendent not the contradictory opposite of immanent, but its necessary correlative. This the advocates of Discovery will not admit. They think that God must always work in accord with the laws established in Creation and upheld by Providence. They therefore imprison the Creator in the world He has made. They deny His creative will. They surrender themselves either to materialistic or idealistic pantheism. They cannot see how God can be personal. They involve themselves in inextricable difficulties when they try to deal with the existence of evil. They cannot stimulate moral effort. They are unable to satisfy the religious longing of our hearts. We agree also that Christianity is a religion in time and space, and that therefore it has had a history and has followed the laws of development. But we also believe that it is the unique, final, and absolute religion, because it contains the final truth concerning the way of salvation. Why not? If mathematics can write the timeless and changeless formula of an infinitely developing series; if one perishable line of poetry can open to us the door of a never dying universe of beauty; if one statement of duty can roll back the veil from the immortal good; why may not Christianity infer from what is in space and time in to the endless glory and holiness of the absolute God? We agree also that in view of Revelation there must be an answering activity on the part of man. But we also believe that this activity does not constitute its content, but appreciates it; does not make the truth, but merely acknowledges it.

We are convinced that the notion of Discovery is too meagre to do justice to the facts. It does not allow God, nor religion, nor

man to come to their rights. It cannot cover the rich variety of our religious experience, nor satisfy our needs. Discovery is of men, and it would assimilate the work of God to the actions of men. But the concept of Revelation provides for all these requirements, and forms the starting point for a high and wide development of truth. We therefore find our satisfaction in Revelation, and we say of it,

"I believe it. 'Tis thou, God that givest, 'tis I who receive:
In the first is the last, in thy will is my power to believe.
All's one gift. Thou canst grant it moreover, as prompt to my prayer
As I breath out this breath, as I open these arms to the air."

DR. HOWARD A. KELLY ON THE BIBLE*

(Johns Hopkins University)

In 1889 I said to myself that the earlier Christians evidently got far more out of the Bible than I was getting, and I determined to investigate it. I am interested in all science—since this is my Father's world, as the song has it—and being a scientist I follow the scientific method; I ask, "What does this science say for itself?" I do not read newspaper discussions about the Bible, the way many people do. Indeed, some doctors form their medical opinions from newspaper and magazine articles, rather than from first hand investigation.

So I asked, "What does the Bible say of itself?" I went through the Book—through the Old Testament and through the New—and I found hundreds, yes thousands, of times that it claims to be the Word of God. Well, I tried it and it worked, and it has been working ever since. I read the Bible in both the Greek and Hebrew originals, and I find it consistent in all its parts. I have not yet seen anything of importance that needed correction. I have seen it confirmed by research, times without number. I believe concerning the Bible that it is all that it claims for itself. Rationally and logically it is God's Word.

It is the foundation of all science. I have met jurists and many other eminent professional men. I have yet to meet one who knew the Bible well but rejected it. I never yet met one who rejected the Word of God who had tried it out on a correct scientific basis. "If any man will do His (God's) will, he shall know of the doctrine."

With all its boastfulness, an evident characteristic of these times is that in fact they are peculiarly unscientific, superficial and illogical. The questions of difficulty about the Bible and miracles really involve begging the question and slipping in imma-

*Thoughts from an address of Dr. Kelly at Princeton Seminary on February 15, 1927.

terial matters. But there is one miracle that I can't believe, and that is that the Bible is not the Word of God. The fundamental question is *Am I dealing with God?* In that case use the right instrument; your instrument—which is keener than a two-edged sword—is the Word of God.

E. V. D.

WHY I BELIEVE THE OLD TESTAMENT*

Of course, I hold all the accepted reasons for believing the Bible to be true. It is recognized that it is the only book that claims to be the Word of God, and its character indicates its supernatural source.

The Bible gives the best philosophical explanation of the Universe. I prefer the philosophy approved by Paul and Athanasius and Augustine and Anselm and Butler as a reasonable ground for man to act upon. No man today, *without revelation*, knows anything more about God than Plato did. An old Professor at Berlin used to say that all the philosophers since have not produced anything equal to Plato. As Addison said (in "Kato")—"Plato, thou reasonest well". But while he said that he believed in God, he added that, if we were to know anything about Him, He Himself must send a messenger to teach us. There is only one *theology*, and it is God-made and God-given. We have no right to call these man-made systems "theology"—they are anthropology; and I can make my own anthropology.

I've been teaching textual criticism of the Old Testament for about forty years—and not to dull fellows either, but to men preparing for their higher degree. In teaching, if we find a difficulty, I have my students go straight to the Hebrew Manuscripts, to the Massoretic notes, to the Greek version, so that they can testify at first hand that today the Old Testament is substantially what it was in the time of Christ. Scientifically considered, there is no doubt that we have today substantially the same Hebrew Bible that was used by Christ and his apostles and to which they gave their approbation.

Recently, a young professor brought out a book about the Old Testament. It was a compilation of the opinions of the men who thought like himself, which he called his "authorities". He never cited the Old Testament text as an authority, but only other radical writers. We sometimes forget that the Bible itself is an authoritative fact in evidence.

There are those who are throwing dust into the people's eyes and giving out the impression that you can't depend on the English version or the Hebrew original of the Old Testament. Either they mean to deceive or they do not know what they are

*Notes from addresses of Professor Robert Dick Wilson, Ph.D., LL.D., given under auspices of the Bible League in Great Britain in 1925.

talking about. There has never been a version, made in good faith, but has contained the plan of salvation and the great doctrines of the church "sufficient unto salvation for everyone that believeth".

In the last thirty years, we have discovered so many original documents that such theories as Wellhausen's and the like are entirely out of date. In 1882 a magazine was started in Germany that was a great protagonist of the Wellhausen theory. A couple of years ago they issued a prospectus announcing a new series of this Magazine of Old Testament Science, saying "What we forty years ago thought to be a science of Old Testament criticism, we have now found not to have been science at all, and it will be the endeavor of this review to reconstruct, if possible, a new science of Old Testament criticism".

The Hebrew Bible is all right, but the trouble is with the would-be interpreters. I don't pretend to understand everything in the Old Testament; but I am interested in knowing that we have the original text to interpret. Here is a Professor who goes on commenting until he gets stuck on something he can't translate or understand; then he says, "There's something the matter here with this text, and so we'll change it to read something that we can understand". Well, if examinations were conducted in that way, every student would always get one hundred percent.

For years I was hunting a way of showing that we could *get back* of the Greek translation of the Third century (Septuagint) in our scientific confirmation of the Old Testament Hebrew text; finally I struck on the *proper names*, especially the proper names of the Kings, more particularly those that are mentioned not only in the Old Testament text but also on their own monuments or on monuments contemporaneous with the Kings mentioned. I found there were 41 names of Kings which are mentioned either on their own monuments or on monuments contemporaneous with themselves. These forty-one names contain 191 Hebrew consonants. I found that out of those 191 consonants used in our present Hebrew text in writing those names of the 41 Kings, there are only two or three about which there could be any controversy as to their being proper renditions of the original names. Yet it is not to be expected that proper names should be handed down correctly. To transmit properly, proper names, for thousands of years, is one of the most wonderful phenomena in connection with historical documents.

For example, there are a number of Egyptian Kings mentioned in the Old Testament—Shishak, Neco, etc.; you will find that those names have been handed on letter by letter in the manuscripts. The Assyrian Kings—such as Sargon, Shalmaneser and Sennacherib—you will again find have their names spelled in the Hebrew Bible text in every case with absolute accuracy.

Perhaps the most marvelous case of all is that of Xerxes—a contemporary of and named by Herodotus. Yet you could never

transliterate Xerxes into the form of Ahasuerus, found in the Old Testament Hebrew text. As spelled in the Bible, (Ahasuerus), Xerxes is nearer to the original form on the Persian monuments, as spelled by Xerxes himself, than you will find anywhere else. How did some Hebrew writer of the second century B. C., writing in Palestine, get Ahasuerus out of Xerxes? I was mentioning the above facts to a certain Professor, and he said that the name of Xerxes alone was enough to confound all the critics. In the Bible it has been handed down all these millenniums correctly. The writers of the Hebrew Bible were for some reason able to spell the proper names of all the Kings of Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria and Persia correctly; they spelled the names of the Egyptian kings just as the Egyptian kings themselves spelled them; they spelled the names of the Assyrian kings with the same accuracy. Yet, proper names are more easily changed than any other words; you will find more mistakes of transmission of proper names than anywhere else.

Secondly: the Bible gives the names of these kings in their *proper chronological order*, from all these various countries—nine or ten of them. Synchronously the Bible gives every king his right and proper place in the scheme of Old Testament history. What is the explanation for such accuracy. The writers would have to read Egyptian and Assyrian and Babylonian and Persian, and have access to all original sources, to write such a history. Yet, what I have been saying about Assyria was not known from 612 B. C., when Nineveh was destroyed, until less than a century ago. Nobody on earth knew how to spell the names of those Assyrian kings. No Greek document gives us the names of these Assyrian kings. Yet when these documents that had been buried for 2,500 years are unearthed and brought to light and read, we find our old friends Tiglath-Pileser, Shalmaneser, Sargon, Sennacherib and Esarhaddon. Is it not a wonderful thing?

There is no man today who knows enough to attack successfully our Old Testament Hebrew text. A Professor does not know anything more about an ancient document without having studied it than you do yourself. A Professor can only know about an ancient document by learning the script of it, by learning the language in which that document is written, and by studying dictionaries, grammars, translations, and all that. If a Professor has not studied those ancient documents and languages he is absolutely unqualified to testify on the matter.

One more point is the *historical accuracy* of the Old Testament, as evidenced by the foreign words embedded in the texts written at different periods—like the raisins in your tea-cakes. In what may be termed the pre-patriarchal period, before Abram left Ur of the Chaldees and journeyed westward to Canaan, you find words of Babylonian and Sumerian origin; in the Egyptian period of bondage, while naturally there remain traces of the former, foreign words of Egyptian origin predominate; in the

Palestinian period of the Conquest and of the Judges you have practically the pure Hebrew—which was spoken in Palestine long before the time of Moses—though there is one word of probably Philistine origin; in the fourth period, that of the Kings, are found words of Armenian and Hittite origin, and especially Aramaic; fifth, the Assyro-Babylonian period, from Tiglath-Pileser to Nebuchadnezzar, is marked by foreign words from that source; sixth, Persian period—the only Old Testament books surely having Persian words being those which, according to the Scriptures themselves, were certainly written in Persian times.

E. V. D.

KNOWING THE TRUTH*

E. Van Deusen

I. *Some Premises as to Knowledge.*

Basic Truths the Ground of all Thought and Action:

A basic fact or idea underlies and is implied in our every act and utterance. Behind and beneath both—recognized or not—are certain so-called “premises” that are the starting-point of all rational thinking in every field. Indeed, there are premises perforce assumed by anyone who would deny them; so, any conclusion of thought that contradicts, directly or indirectly, such fundamental premises of thought is plainly senseless.

(a) *Rationality:*

We unavoidably premise that we are *rational* beings; to deny this is to affirm one’s irrationality and hence the folly of his words. But, rational beings must think according to the laws of rational, orderly thought. Whoever starts with true premises and thinks according to these laws will reach true conclusions or knowledge—which is the manifest end or purpose of rationality. A conclusion that holds the impossibility of real knowledge, or that is insufficient and inadequate, or that is self-contradictory, is plainly irrational and false.

(b) *Personality and Objective Reality:*

The pre-requisite condition of all knowledge is Consciousness. To deny its reality thereby affirms it; plainly, one can’t know without conscious knowing.

Human consciousness testifies to the reality of two prime facts—the existence of *Self* and of *Not-self*, nor can consciousness be otherwise convinced by any amount of adverse and seeming argument. One’s self, as distinct from and yet the essential common

*This initial paper treats of (a) Some Premises regarding Knowledge, (b) Meaning of Truth and Knowledge, with certain Corollaries regarding Truth, (c) Some designations of Truth, (d) Truth and Personal Opinions. Following will be the Means of Knowledge, the Tests of Truth, etc.

bond of all one's successive conscious states, is known through the innate primary power of *Self-consciousness*; while knowledge of our bodies and the world of matter as presented through its properties is gained through the primary powers of *Sense-perception*. In all our knowing thought, consciousness ever distinguishes between the known things and our knowing selves. We have no clearer consciousness than the separateness and distinctness of these two realities; and this is confirmed by the normal conduct of mankind universally.

(c) *Truth Knowable:*

All constructive teaching and study takes for granted that there is fixed *truth* and that it *can be known*. We may not, of course, know all about a reality, but we *know so much* about it *as is manifested*. This is implied also in the fact of a rational humanity at the head of an orderly and so rational world. What is the use of rationality in a world of law and order save as a means to the end of apprehending truth? Aristotle said, "Man is competently organized for truth; and truth in general is not beyond his reach". Indeed, any denial of the possibility of knowing truth is self-contradictory—it is to say that one knows that he cannot know.

Truth is not the monopoly of an aristocracy of so-called "authorities"; the humblest honest man who starts with true premises of fact or thought and follows strictly the legitimate laws of thought is as sure of correct conclusions as is a "professor". Indeed, the prime function of the "specialist" is to supply *facts*—not theories; from real facts, anyone who will obey the laws of thought can draw proper inferences and knowledge.

II. *Truth and Knowledge*—meanings:

Truth is basally the real, the actual, or the definite principle or thing as it exists. The fact is the gauge of a truth. So, for the human mind, exact representation or interpretation of a fact is the essence of a known truth. In general, intellectual truth consists of not only those laws of thought and *primary truths* that are the fruit of the mind's necessary native powers and that appear upon the mere inspection of a thing, but also of every *agreement* of the mind's derived convictions with the corresponding realities—of the thought with the thing, or its special phase in question.

Knowledge is the discernment and assurance—from the evidence—of the truth, and to know is to perceive or apprehend a fact with conviction that it is real or true. So, truth is essential to knowledge and only as we know the truth do we truly know. An idea that disagrees with the reality is not a part of real knowledge.

III. *Certain Corollaries* as to Truth:

Clearly, the dominant factor in truth is fact or reality. Certain corollaries follow,

(a) Each Truth is *Singular* in essence:

For every point of fact or reality at any time there is plainly possible but one truly representative idea, but one corresponding thought agreement with that particular thing, hence but one possible truth—though, of course, this one truth may be held by many. In mathematics there are three alternatives—a thing may be less, equal to, or greater than another; but in the logic of thought there are but two alternatives—a thing either is or is not. An idea is either true or not true—analogueous to the law of Being, which either is or is not.

(b) Each Truth is *General* in application:-

Resting as it does on a definite reality, a certain truth is at any time equally true for all men alike, and will be so long as the present natural laws and constitution of the world continue. In the very nature of the case, it is impossible that a truth should be true in fact for one man but not true for another, even though he himself may not apprehend it. This is so as to those primary, self-evident or intuitive truths that are the expressions of man's native mental and moral nature; also as to all further truths legitimately derived therefrom or from experience by the laws of rational, orderly, logical thought—which are alike for all men. That two straight lines cannot enclose a space is equally true for all, everywhere and always; that inhumanity is morally wrong is as true for one as for another, in China or Chicago, now as in the ancient land of Nod.

(c) Each Truth is *Tenseless* in time:

A truth may relate to a present or to a past fact; but the truth is tenseless, or at least ever in the present tense. Strictly speaking, Once a truth always a truth. A truth is no less true because old, nor an error false because new. Age has no bearing on this matter. Truths may be considered the abiding spirits, as it were, of factual bodies that may have their day and cease to be; but the truthfulness of a truth is undimmed by age. Day by day facts pass into and become part of history; and whenever any such fact has been correctly apprehended you have a historical truth that so remains. Thus, reliable history is possible and significant.

IV. Some Terms applied to Truth:

New and Old:-

New truths may naturally follow the disclosure of new or newly-known facts, or to correspond with changes in the constitution of known realities. But—from its nature—a new cannot contradict, though it may eclipse or supplement, an old truth. The force of a truth depends on the qualitative importance of the fact to which it refers, rather than to that fact's quantitative duration. With a continuing reality, the corresponding truth is both constant and final so long as that reality remains. Finality

of truth always attends permanence of fact; nor can a certain truth itself ever change.

Absolute and Relative:

All truth is relative in the sense that it relates and must relate to realities; but the common expression "relative" applied to truth really means conditional. As truth involves the agreement or correspondence of idea with reality, there evidently can be no conditional truth—either there is agreement and truth, or there is not; there is no third alternative—as before indicated. Any inquiry regarding relative or conditional truth must refer, not to the truthfulness, but to the obligatoriness of the truth in question. This can apply only in the realm where oughtness applies, that is in the realm of moral obligation. But moral obligation exists only as to a higher moral authority than our finite selves—i. e. to an infinite and intelligent personality who is absolute. Truth related to the absolute must be absolute, unconditional and so changeless truth. With an abiding, changeless and unconditioned reality or being, you naturally have in consequence only abiding, changeless, unconditioned or absolute truth. There are truths that may be supplemented or eclipsed by greater and more important ones; but there are also truths that are absolute in their unconditioned changelessness, their universal application, and their permanent authority.

V. *Truth and Personal Opinions:*

"Facts are stubborn things to deal with" because they don't and can't conform to personal opinions. Obviously, neither the existence nor nature of a past fact is changed by present opinions; and every-day events show that present facts are not changed by opinions—if they were, this earth would be a fool's paradise and none would suffer the fruits of his folly. So, as our opinions don't change the facts, our necessary "adjustment" to this world of realities must be made by conforming our thoughts to the facts. This agreement of idea with reality is truth.

Nor is truth the product of a *comparison* of different opinions. Two or more ideas may be in accord with each other, and yet all be false. There is no alchemy by which one can extract truth from a lot of erroneous personal views. A physicist may start with the proposition that the attraction of matter for matter varies inversely as the distance—vs. the square of the distance—and so construct on paper a solar system that would be consistent in all its parts, and yet untrue to the actual reality. The muddled thinking that holds the test of truth to be that someone believes it is consequent on a haughty disregard of the grounds and necessary laws of orderly thought. The best cure for such notions is to apply them for a year in business backed by one's own pocketbook. Real objective standards—rather than those of subjective thought—are as necessary for testing truth as is a foot-rule or a scale to decide the disputed size of a fish.

Certainty is essential to knowledge; and you can't reach certainty when you begin without it, simply by comparing one idea with another.

In passing it hardly need be said that truth is completely independent of human *personalities*—popular or not. A diamond is a diamond in any setting.

In this connection also a word as to so-called “independent thinking”: independence in thought—as in action—is desirable so long as it conforms to and is not independent of the natural and necessary laws of thought—but no longer. There are controlling laws of thought, as of conduct; and, whenever these are ignored, “independent thinking” is worse than useless—it's but a “joy ride” on the road to error.

Another incidental word as to “broadmindedness” or so-called liberality of thought; to be broadminded is to have a wide range of mental interests; but the intellectual must be intelligent, and this involves truth and knowledge. An intelligent, knowing broadmindedness must be discerning—a discriminating or judicial-mindedness—i. e. a mind open to all related evidence and refusing all irrelevant and immaterial matters; a mind like a clean sieve that separates the wheat from the chaff, not a garbage can that takes in everything. A “broad” or judicial mind weighs and interprets carefully *all* and *only* pertinent evidence according to the basic rules of evidential thinking; decides according to the demands of rational, orderly thought; tests the conclusions with the fundamental tests of truth; and then frankly accepts the verdict.

FIFTY-THREE LEADING RELIGIOUS BOOKS

This book list is for ordinary, intelligent laymen and students in colleges, etc., who wish to know of and read a few standard, authoritative Christian works that are scholarly, sound and reliable. For convenience, rather than exact scientific classification, the books are topically grouped. Books of an evidential or “apologetic” character—rather than biographical, devotional, homiletic, etc.—are preferred, to conform with the general character of this periodical—whose chief function is to give in brief, convenient form some of the evidential material that indicates the reasonableness and authority of evangelical Christian faith. Some titles now found mainly in well-stocked libraries are given because of their recognized excellence; logical truth is never “out-of-date”. While many other valuable works might be suggested, the necessarily limited number here given covers a broad field of current interest.

E. Van Deusen.

GOD:

Flint, Rob't—Theism (Blackwood)
Hall, J. A.—The Nature of God (Lutheran Publ. Soc'y)

CHRIST:

- La Touche, E. D.—The Person of Christ
in Modern Thought (Ja's Clark & Co.)
Liddon, H. P.—The Divinity of Our Lord (Rivington)
Vos, G.—The Self-Disclosure of Jesus (Doran)
Warfield, B. B.—The Lord of Glory (Am. Tract Soc'y)

THE HOLY SPIRIT:

- Kuyper, A.—The Work of the Holy Spirit (Funk & Wagnalls)
Smeaton, G.—Doctrine of the Holy Spirit (T. & T. Clark)
Smith, J. R.—The Holy Spirit in the Gospels (Macmillan)

IMMORTALITY:

- Macartney, C. E.—Putting on Immortality (Revell)
Salmond, S. D. F.—The Christian Doctrine
of Immortality (Scribner)

THE BIBLE:

- Bettex, F.—The Bible the Word of God (Eaton & Mains)
Davis, J. D.—Dictionary of the Bible (Westminster Press)
Kelly, Dr. H. A.—A Scientific Man and
the Bible (S. S. Times Co.)
Kyle, M. G.—Deciding Voice of the Mon-
uments in Biblical Criticism (Bibliotheca Sacra Co.)

THE OLD TESTAMENT:

- Bruce, W. S.—The Ethics of the Old Testament (T. & T. Clark)
Orr, Ja's—The Problem of the O. T. (Scribner)
Robinson, G. L.—The Book of Isaiah (Assoc'n Press)
Sampey, J. R.—The Heart of the Old Testament (Doran)
Wilson, R. D.—Scientific Investigation of
the Old Testament (S. S. Times Co.)

THE NEW TESTAMENT:

- Machen, J. G.—The Origin of Paul's Religion (Macmillan)
Zahn, Th.—Introduction to the New Testament (Scribner)

INSPIRATION:

- Lee, Wm.—Inspiration of Holy Scripture (Carter)
Urquhart, J.—Inspiration and Accuracy of
Holy Scriptures (Marshall Bros.)
Vine, W. E.—Divine Inspiration of the
Bible (Pickering & Ingliss)

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH:

- Greene, Jr., W. B.—Christian Doctrine (Westminster Press)
Hodge, A. A.—Outlines of Theology (B. I. Colport. Ass'n)
Torrey, R. A.—Fundamental Doctrines
of Christian Faith (Doran)

AUTHORITY:

- Hall, F. J.—Authority, Ecclesiastical and
Biblical (Longmans, Green & Co.)
Huizinga, A. vC. P.—Authority, Its
Function in Life (Sherman, French & Co.)

PROPHECY:

- Beecher, W. J.—The Prophets and the Promise (Crowell)
Orelli, C. von—Old Testament Prophecy, etc. (T. & T. Clark)
Smith, R. P.—Prophecy, a Preparation for Christ... (Macmillan)

MIRACLES:

- Beardsley, F. G.—The Miracles of Jesus (Am. Tract Soc'y.)
Laidlaw, J.—The Miracles of our Lord (Hodder & Stoughton)
Warfield, B. B.—Counterfeit Miracles (Scribners)

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES:

- Hamilton, F. E.—The Basis of Christian Faith (Doran)
Johnson, W. H.—Christian Faith under
Modern Searchlights (Revell)
Keyser, L. S.—A System of Christian
Evidences (Lutheran Lit. Board)

CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY:

- Bavinck, H.—The Philosophy of Revela-
tion (Longmans, Green & Co.)
Orr, Ja's,—The Christian View of God
and the World (Scribners)
Patton, F. L.—Fundamental Christianity (Macmillan)

ORIGIN AND NATURE OF MAN:

- Laidlaw, J.—Bible Doctrine of Man (T. & T. Clark)
Orr, Ja's,—God's Image in Man (Hodder & Stoughton)

MODERNISM:

- Hall, F. J.—Christianity and Modernism (Gorham)
Harris, C.—Creeds or no Creeds (Dutton)
Machen, J. G.—What is Faith (Macmillan)

EVOLUTION:

- Johnson, W. H.—Can the Christian now
believe in Evolution? (S. S. Times)
More, L. T.—The Dogma of Evolution (Princeton Univ'y Pr.)
Morton, H. C.—The Bankruptcy of Evolution (Marshall Bros.)
O'Toole, G. B.—The Case against Evolution (Macmillan)
Wasmann, E.—Modern Biology and the
Theory of Evolution (Herder)
Zerbe, A. S.—Christianity and False
Evolutionism (Central Publ. House)